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COKE OF NORFOLK & HIS FRIENDS. VOL. II

Sir Thomas Lawrence P.R.A. pinxt.

Thomas William Coke, M.P.

An engraving of this picture was published in 1814.
dedicated to the Agriculturalists of the United Kingdom.

COKE OF NORFOLK AND HIS FRIENDS

THE LIFE OF THOMAS WILLIAM COKE, FIRST EARL OF LEICESTER OF HOLKHAM, CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF HIS ANCESTRY, SURROUNDINGS, PUBLIC SERVICES & PRIVATE FRIENDSHIPS, & INCLUDING MANY UNPUBLISHED LETTERS FROM NOTED MEN OF HIS DAY, ENGLISH & AMERICAN

BY A. M. W. STIRLING

WITH 20 PHOTOGRAVURE & 43 OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS REPRODUCED FROM CONTEMPORARY PORTRAITS, PRINTS, ETC. TWO VOLUMES. VOLUME TWO

"I have never received a farthing of the public money—my hands are clean"—T. W. Coke

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
XX.	JOHN AND AMELIA OPIE, 1800–1802. *ÆTAT.* 46–48	1
XXI.	THE DEATH OF FOX, 1803–1806. *ÆTAT.* 49–52	24
XXII.	THE DICTATOR, 1806–1807. *ÆTAT.* 52–53	55
XXIII.	MISCELLANEOUS EVENTS, 1807–1816. *ÆTAT.* 53–62	84
XXIV.	WILLIAM ROSCOE AND THE HOLKHAM LIBRARY, 1810–1816. *ÆTAT.* 56–62 . .	124
XXV.	MISS COKE'S DÉBUT, 1813–1819. *ÆTAT.* 59–65	151
XXVI.	CORRESPONDENCE OF LORD MOIRA, 1813–1815	198
XXVII.	QUEEN CAROLINE. *ÆTAT.* 63–67 . .	217
XXVIII.	THE LAST OF THE "CLIPPINGS," 1821. *ÆTAT.* 67	246
XXIX.	REMARRIAGE, 1821–1824. *ÆTAT.* 67–70 .	276
XXX.	OLD LIFE AND YOUNG, 1824–1829. *ÆTAT.* 70–75	323
XXXI.	LAPSUS LINGUÆ, 1825–1830. *ÆTAT.* 71–76	353

CHAPTER PAGE

XXXII. The Passing of the Reform Bill, 1830–1833. *Ætat.* 76–79 388

XXXIII. Retirement from Active Life, 1831–1837. *Ætat.* 77–83 418

XXXIV. The Last Years, 1837–1842. *Ætat.* 83–88 451

Epilogue 485

Appendix A 493

Appendix B 497

Pedigree showing the Connection between the Families of Coke and Roberts . *To face page* 498

Pedigree of Thomas William Coke, showing Descent from Sir Edward Coke, the Lord Chief Justice . . . . *To face page* 498

Descendants of Thomas William Coke, Earl of Leicester of Holkham. Compiled by Reginald Glencross, M.A., LL.B., Barrister-at-Law . 501

Index 537

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

THOMAS WILLIAM COKE, M.P. . . . . *Frontispiece*
From a picture by Lawrence. An engraving of this picture was published in 1814, dedicated to the Agriculturalists of the United Kingdom

To face page

JANE, ELDEST DAUGHTER OF THOMAS WILLIAM COKE, WIFE OF CHARLES NEVINSON HOWARD, VISCOUNT ANDOVER . . 2
From a miniature in the possession of Beatrice, Lady Ellenborough

THE WOBURN SHEEP-SHEARING 32
From a print in possession of the Duke of Bedford

PIECE OF PLATE PRESENTED TO T. W. COKE IN 1804 BY THE FARMERS OF NORFOLK 34

THOMAS WILLIAM COKE 58
From an engraving by G. Garrard

THOMAS WILLIAM COKE, M.P. 112
From a portrait by Barber, painted for Martin ffolkes Rishton, *circa* 1816

FRANCIS BLAKIE, STEWARD TO T. W. COKE AT HOLKHAM . . 122

JAMES EDWARD SMITH, M.D., F.R.S., PRESIDENT OF THE LINNEAN SOCIETY 126

RICHARD ROBERTS JONES 140

WILLIAM ROSCOE 150
From a drawing by Alfred Croquis

ELIZABETH WILHELMINA, YOUNGEST DAUGHTER OF THOMAS WILLIAM COKE (AFTERWARDS LADY ELIZABETH SPENCER-STANHOPE) 154
From a picture by Barber

LADY SMITH IN FANCY DRESS, AS A FORTUNE-TELLER . . 176
From a picture by Opie

DISTANT VIEW OF HOLKHAM, THE SEAT OF THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF LEICESTER 224

RICHARD RUSH 252

To face page

THOMAS WILLIAM COKE INSPECTING HIS SOUTHDOWN SHEEP . 266
From an engraving by William Ward, after Thomas Weaver

ANNE ANSON, SECOND WIFE OF THE FOURTH EARL OF ROSEBERY 284

THE LADY ANNE COKE 292
From a painting by John Hayter in the possession of Arthur H. Renshaw, Esq.

JOHN DUNN HUNTER 316
From a drawing by C. R. Leslie. Printed by C. Hullmandel.

THE CHILDREN OF HOLKHAM 342
From an engraving made in Brussels, October, 1829

JANE DIGBY, LADY ELLENBOROUGH 348
From the portrait painted by command of Louis XVIII of Bavaria, now in the Royal Gallery at Munich

THE RIGHT HON. CHARLES JAMES FOX 360
By Sir Joshua Reynolds

THOMAS WILLIAM COKE 362
Bust by Chantrey (full face)

THOMAS WILLIAM COKE 364
Bust by Chantrey (three-quarter face)

CHANTREY'S WOODCOCKS 366

THOMAS WILLIAM COKE, ESQ., M.P. 390
From a painting by R. R. Reinagle, A.R.A.

BATHURST, BISHOP OF NORWICH 436
From a silhouette by Augn Edouart, 1829

STATE BEDROOM AT HOLKHAM, WHERE PRINCESS VICTORIA SLEPT 440

THOMAS WILLIAM COKE 450
From a drawing made at Holkham, by W. C. Edwards in 1824

THOMAS WILLIAM COKE 456
From a miniature in the possession of his son, the Honble. Henry Coke

BAS-RELIEF—IRRIGATION 488
From the monument in Holkham Park

BAS-RELIEF—GRANTING A LEASE 490
From the monument in Holkham Park

MONUMENT TO T. W. COKE, EARL OF LEICESTER, ERECTED BY PUBLIC SUBSCRIPTION IN HOLKHAM PARK. SHOWING THE BAS-RELIEF—SHEEP-SHEARING 492

COKE OF NORFOLK AND HIS FRIENDS

COKE OF NORFOLK AND HIS FRIENDS

CHAPTER XX

JOHN AND AMELIA OPIE

1800–1802

Ætat 46–48

THE summer when Mrs. Coke died, the guests who were to have been present at the annual Sheep-shearing at Holkham were, instead, invited to stay at Woburn. Few besides local farmers, therefore, met at Holkham that year; and in the following autumn only relations or very intimate friends assembled for the shooting, when Lady Andover, in her deep mourning for both husband and mother, did the honours in that mother's place.

Fox, however, did not allow Coke to remain long in his seclusion.

The condition of the country had annually been waxing more deplorable, and now two years of scarcity had raised the price of corn to the unprecedented sum of one hundred and twenty shillings a quarter. The previous November in France, Napoleon had been

proclaimed First Consul, and the successful issue of the various campaigns in which he had been engaged created fresh panic in England. In view of the prevailing disquietude, Pitt found it necessary to have an autumn session in 1800, and early in the following year Grey brought forward a motion on the State of the Nation. Whereupon Fox, who, except when any very important measure claimed his attention, had been in retirement since 1798, promptly wrote to induce Coke to come up to town. "As I have been persuaded to attend Grey's motion on the second of March," he explained, "I own I should like to have as good attendance as possible, especially of persons that I particularly regard." Coke consented, and was present in the House, but the motion was lost by 291 to 105, on March 25th, 1801.

Just before that date, a change had taken place in the Ministry. The same month which witnessed the death of Mrs. Coke in 1800 was a memorable one in parliamentary history. The political union between England and Ireland was then arranged, and in the following January, 1801, the first Parliament of the United Kingdom assembled. Forthwith, Pitt was forced to confront a question more formidable to him than even the vexed question of the war with France and the prevailing distress at home. The tacit support of the Irish Roman Catholics whose opposition to the union would have proved fatal, had been gained by a promise that their claims for representation in Parliament should be secured. Owing to the personal opposition of the King and to the diversity of opinion on this measure, Pitt found himself unable to fulfil his promise. "Are

Jane, eldest daughter of Thomas William Coke, wife of Charles Nevinson Howard, Viscount Andover.

From a miniature in the possession of Beatrice, Lady Ellenborough.

we to have Peace or War? Are we to be governed by the candid Addington or the imperious Pitt? Are we to be cursed again by 'a heaven-born' minister?" wrote Dr. Parr excitedly to Coke; and Pitt, who resigned in February, was succeeded by Addington on March 21st.

The month following was one of special interest to all Norfolk men. For some time past the general conduct of Russia had made it evident that that country was engaged in the French interests. A fleet under Sir Hyde Parker, with Nelson as second in command, was dispatched to the Baltic. Negotiations were tried with the Danes, and Parker, a dilatory commander, was urged by Nelson's pluck and energy to attack Copenhagen. On April 2nd he commenced the attack which resulted in the Danes being forced to agree to a long armistice; whereupon the fleet, having sailed against the Swedes, who withdrew, proceeded against the Russians. Eventually the accession of Alexander I changed the policy of Russia, and peace was secured between that country and England; but Norfolk throughout proved an inversion of the rule that a hero is without honour in his own country; Nelson's manœuvres were followed with a personal interest, and Nelson's successes were acclaimed with a personal pride by all men belonging to his own county; while that Coke shared their faith in Nelson's courage and capability is evinced by an amusing entry in the Betting Book at Brooks's Club, dated April 30th, 1801, which sets forth that:

"*Mr. Coke bets Sir Thomas Miller 50 guineas that Nelson is neither taken prisoner or capitulated.*"

The following March the peace of Amiens was con-

cluded, a peace which, as a critic remarked, "everybody is glad of and nobody proud of." Windham, however, moved an address to the Crown against the Peace on May 13th, and this unpopular move cost him dear.[1] In June a contested election took place for the city of Norwich—the first after an interval of thirty-four years; and Windham, who had retained his seat for Norwich since 1784, now found himself opposed by William Smith, the leader of the Nonconformists. Recognising that popular feeling was against him, he wrote for Coke's support, which, in spite of their recent political differences, he believed would not be denied him.

William Windham to Thomas William Coke.

"PALL MALL, *June 4th*, 1802.

"My Dear Sir,

"Though the Whig Club have drunk success to Mr. Smith and Mr. Fellows, and though your politicks may upon the whole go more with theirs than with mine, yet I do not infer from thence that Political consideration will so prevail over the private regard which I will flatter myself is not at all abated, as to deprive me of your support in the contest with which we are threatened. I must say nothing about my Colleague, except that he is a very worthy, downright and honourable man, and that even in respect of Politicks you may consider him, I think, as being at least as good as Mr. Fellows. I am persuaded that he would be of the same opinion between Mr. Fellows and you; I mean, that if Mr. Fellows was likely to give every vote in the same way that he or I should, he would still like your adverse votes better than the others' favourable ones.

"With this part of the question, however, it does

[1] He afterwards frankly admitted that his judgment had been at fault in opposing the Peace.

not belong to me to meddle more than I have done. For myself, I will not readily give myself the mortification of thinking that any political differences which can at present subsist will deprive me of having your wishes and good offices in my favour.

"Yours, my dear Sir,

"Very truly,

"W. WINDHAM.

"I looked for you a great while ago in St. James' St., but, not knowing of your having taken a house, inquired only at the hotel and accordingly missed you."

But to Coke, with his horror of needless bloodshed, the knowledge that Windham had advocated the continuance of a useless and cruel warfare was a fact which he could not condone, and the severity of his answer, so different from the cordiality of his former attitude towards Windham, marks his disapprobation of the Apostate.

Thomas William Coke to William Windham.

"HOLKHAM, *June 6th*, 1802.

"My Dear Sir,

"In answer to your letter this moment received, I will tell you, as you desire it, exactly what has been my conduct, and the measures taken by me during the last contest at Norwich. In the first place you must allow me to say that no friend of yours could be more astonished at the change in your Political sentiments, or more deeply lament it than myself. No man felt more pleasure in another's company than I did in yours, till your warmth in carrying on the most deplorable, and in my opinion the most disgraceful war this kingdom was ever engaged in, led you, in debate, to make use of language which I

felt I did not deserve any more than those with whom I acted.

"I thought the War from the beginning both unjust and unnecessary, and a War that wise Counsel would have avoided; it has terminated disgracefully, as I expected; and, as His Majesty wisely said in his address, has been an extended, Bloody, and expensive War: and had it not been His gracious pleasure to have removed from his Counsels those Ministers who supported it, we should have been involved in all the horrors of its complicated misery at this very moment. I own I rejoiced most cordially in the Peace, or Capitulation, if you like the term better; and in order to maintain a consistent character (and I trust no man can impute to me the contrary) it was not possible for me to positively support you at Norwich; but the recollection of early friendship which is not, and perhaps can never be wholly obliterated from my mind, prevented me from taking any very active part against you.

"I will now state how matters stand upon this head:—I carried four votes at Wells and one at Lynn polling; but these, it must be observed, were offered, and not sought by me.

"I remain,

"Dear Sir, with great regard,

"Yours truly,

"THOMAS WILLIAM COKE."

In point of fact, William Smith was not particularly anxious to stand for Norwich, but the éclat of opposing, perhaps ousting a man of Windham's political status proved too strong a temptation, and he was elected, to the great triumph of the Whigs.

Shortly before this occurred, Coke had journeyed to Woburn—a sad expedition, for earlier in the year his great friend Francis, Duke of Bedford, had died, and

the object of this visit was to consult with the new Duke upon the best means of carrying out his predecessor's intentions with regard to the Sheep-shearing there. Arthur Young, who was present on this occasion, afterwards returned with Coke for the Holkham Sheep-shearing, "at which," he relates, "I have never been before. He does it handsomely. Two hundred dined on plate. The dinner better than at Woburn, I think from the vicinity to the sea, which gives plenty of fish."[1]

Although opposed in politics, considering the community of interest in agricultural matters which subsisted between Arthur Young and Coke, it appears strange that the former had never previously attended Coke's great agricultural function, more especially as his wife had been a Miss Allen of Lynn, sister to Mrs. Rishton. But Arthur Young's heart had been broken at the death of his favourite little daughter "Bobbin" in 1797, and he was already a prey to the religious melancholia which characterised his later years. On being again invited to Holkham, he wrote how—

> "The Duke of Bedford and Mr. Coke have written desiring me to go to Woburn and Holkham, but all great meetings and anything like festivity have for some years become so insipid and disagreeable that I shall have done with them wholly. They are links of that worldly harness which it is high time for me to throw down for ever."

And he never again was present at what he terms the "four days' bustle" of the Holkham "Clippings."

Scarcely, however, was Coke released from his duties

[1] *Autobiography of Arthur Young*, edited by M. Betham Edwards (1898), p. 385.

on this occasion than he had to face the exertions of a General Election. Sir Edward Astley had recently died, and Coke wrote to his son, now Sir Jacob,[1] to promise every support if the latter would stand in conjunction with himself—"A handsome and kind offer of friendship," Sir Jacob assured him, "which can never be erased." But while Coke's own election was secure, the Whigs were horrified at a rumour that Windham, so recently ousted from Norwich, now intended to stand for the county of Norfolk.

> "Though," wrote Fox to Coke from Arlington Street on July 8th, "I do not believe the report of Windham's offering himself for the county, I wrote as soon as I heard it to Cholmondeley.[2] I had no apprehensions about his supporting *you*, but he has of late been a little slippery. I thought it right to secure him for Sir Jacob or whosoever you wished.—This cursed Poll here is a most unexpected trouble."

Lord Cholmondeley in his reply did his best to reassure Fox, explaining that he had already written to his agent in Norfolk to do everything that Coke desired. But although Windham did not take any part in the contest, Fox's anxiety during the poll was great.

It lasted eight days, and each day he appears to have written to Coke reporting or inquiring progress, and sending freeholders at his own expense from all parts of the country down to vote, until the happy moment when he could at last write to Coke: "Many thanks for your letter and its good news—*I begin to hope, too!*"

[1] Fifth baronet.

[2] George James, 4th Earl; b. 1749, d. 1827; advanced to the Earldom of Rocksavage and Marquisate of Cholmondeley November 22nd, 1815.

At the end of the poll the numbers were—for Coke 4317, for Astley 3612, and for Colonel Wodehouse 2517. Coke congratulated the freeholders warmly on the fact that "the country had got rid of the late vile Administration and its viler head, Mr. Pitt!" The contest had actually cost the sum of £35,000; but the triumph of the Whigs was not yet secure. A scrutiny was demanded by the friends of Colonel Wodehouse, and was granted. It began on July 30th, and continued till August 28th. The expenses were paid by the friends of Astley and Coke, who subscribed no less than £9,691 17s. for this purpose. On August 28th the scrutiny was abandoned by Colonel Wodehouse's counsel, and Astley and Coke were declared duly elected. The former subsequently represented Norfolk for many years in Parliament.[1]

In those days there was only one orthodox manner of celebrating any joyful event. An annual dinner was forthwith instituted to commemorate this triumph of the Whigs; and the list of toasts proposed on the first anniversary may present a certain interest for the curious.

In the *Iris* for July 30th, 1803, we read how—

> "On Wednesday Se'night, the anniversary of the County Election, a numerous party of the friends of Sir J. Astley and T. W. Coke, Esquire, dined at the King's Head, Lynn.
>
> "The day passed with much conviviality.
>
> "The following, with many other appropriate toasts were given:—
>
> "'The King, and the invaluable Constitution.'

[1] Died 1817.

"'Sir J. Astley and T. W. Coke, and may they long represent the county.'

"'The Norfolk Freeholders.'

"'The Mayor [Lionel Self] and Prosperity to the Town of Lynn—and may the present and future Improvements depend upon its *Self*.'

"'Our Absent Friends.'

"'The Lord Lieutenant of the County.'

"'Lady Astley, and Prosperity to the House of Melton.'

"'Lady Andover, and Prosperity to the House of Holkham.'

"'Lord Cholmondeley.'

"'Lord Nelson.'

"'The Members for the Town.'

"'The Yeomanry of England.'

"'May Honour and Honesty subdue Craft and Calumny.'

"'May those who began first come in last.'

"'The soil of England, and may it prove a grave to its Invaders.'" Etc. etc.

The list of toasts, in all, was thirty in number. And for this dinner, with its thirty toasts and its consequent "conviviality," the tickets were eleven shillings, including wine. With this latter item—to which we may rest assured the freeholders did ample justice during a space of several hours—the price cannot be considered dear.

As to Lord Cholmondeley, who had thus reinstated himself in the good opinion of the Whigs, he remained always a staunch friend of Coke's. One anecdote is related of him in this connection, some years later. An agreeable and fascinating man, he was extremely fond of luxury and display. He was one of the four who set up the celebrated Faro Bank at Brooks's which ruined half the town, and from which his gains were enormous;

but not content with this and with his large private income, he became most fortunate, and to his friends most formidable, in discovering forgotten claims to property, which he thus successfully added to his already large possessions.

At one time, when looking over some deed in order to raise money, he discovered that he had some claim upon the property of young Lord Clinton, who, fearing that he might be totally ruined if the claim were allowed, promptly suggested a compromise.

The affair made a great commotion, and Coke at once wrote sarcastically to Lord Cholmondeley: "That wishing to feel easy in his mind as to his own property, which he had inherited from a long train of ancestors, but knowing the various claims which his lordship possessed upon that of others, he begged leave to inquire what sum Lord Cholmondeley would be content to receive as an indemnity for any claim he might hereafter think fit to make upon the Holkham estate?"

Lord Cholmondeley replied in the same vein, "that with every wish to tranquillise the mind of an old and much-loved friend, he did not think that in justice to his own family he could consistently enter into *any* arrangement which might hereafter be so detrimental to their future interests!"[1]

Immediately after the Election of 1802, on July 29th, Fox set off for a tour through the Netherlands, telling Coke that on his return he intended to visit Paris in

[1] *A portion of a Journal kept by T. Raikes* (1856), Vol. II, pp. 84–5.

order to consult certain records for a history of the Revolution of 1688 which he intended writing.[1]

Meanwhile, two other people, well known to Coke, were also purposing to visit Paris.

Amongst the many celebrities for whom Norwich was famous at this date, one of the best known was Amelia Opie. The daughter of Dr. Alderson of Norwich, born 1769, she early became famous for her novels and her verses, which were widely read by her contemporaries. She was, moreover, a fascinating personality. Her charm of manner, her vivacity, her wonderful singing, her dancing, her passionate love of all that was bright and beautiful, enhanced her popularity, while of her good looks there can be no doubt; her face, we are told, "was bright, animated and beaming, her eyes soft and expressive, yet full of candour; her hair was abundant and beautiful, of auburn hue and waving in long tresses; her figure was well formed, her carriage fine, her hands and arms well shaped; and all around and about her was the spirit of youth and joy and love."[2]

This joyous, exuberant vitality seems to have been her most fascinating characteristic; and, combined with her appearance, made a deep impression upon John Opie, the painter. A man of humble origin, Opie had risen by his own genius and perseverance; and, since he early attracted the attention of Coke, it may not be inappropriate to mention here the story of his first effort in that line of art which afterwards brought him

[1] *A History of the Early Part of the Reign of King James II.* With an introductory chapter.

[2] *Memorials of Amelia Opie,* by P. S Brightwell, p. 36.

fame. He related to Coke that, when a small boy of ten or twelve, he was left at home one Sunday afternoon with his father while his mother went to church. The father established himself in the parlour with his Bible, and told the boy to be quiet and amuse himself. Young Opie, who had procured some paints, took up his position unobserved in the kitchen, directly opposite the parlour door. Very quietly he drew a portrait of the old man bending over his Bible, until he had finished everything except the head, when he began running backwards and forwards to study his father's face. The old man grew very angry at these apparently senseless interruptions, and threatened to punish his son if they continued. This was exactly what the boy wanted, as he wished to paint his father's eyes lit up and sparkling with anger; so he continued his irritating behaviour until it met with the desired result, and his father, justly wrathful, administered a sound thrashing. This achieved, the boy resumed his task eagerly, and transferred to his picture the expression which he had just seen upon the face of his indignant parent. When his mother returned from church, he placed the picture triumphantly before her; but although astonished and delighted with it, she thought it her duty to scold her son severely for painting on a Sunday. Young Opie, however, cared no more for the scolding than for the beating he had received in accomplishing his work, and only hugged his mother delightedly in his excitement at its success. His father coming into the room at that juncture and spying the portrait of himself, was so surprised and pleased at it that he told the mother not to scold the

boy any more, as he had done "quite right in painting such a clever picture on a Sunday." Subsequently, whenever the picture was shown, he used to tell with great relish the story of young Opie's plucky acceptance of a beating in order to ensure its success.

Before Opie became famous, Coke was much struck with his work, and soon employed him to execute various commissions. Coke was always anxious to possess some representation of any friend to whom he was attached; and as he gave Nollekens various commissions to execute busts of Francis, Duke of Bedford, Fox, Windham and Lord Hastings, so he gave Opie commissions to paint portraits of Dr. Parr, Fox and other of his friends. Opie therefore visited Holkham several times in connection with this work; and it was on one of these occasions that he was beguiled into attending a party at Norwich, under promise of an introduction to the fascinating and gifted Amelia Alderson, whom he had a great curiosity to see. He described afterwards how he awaited her arrival with impatience, and how, "at length the door opened, and she entered, bright and smiling, dressed in a robe of blue, her neck and arms bare, and on her head a small bonnet, placed in a somewhat coquettish style, sideways, and surmounted by a plume of three white feathers. Her beautiful hair hung in rich waving masses over her shoulders, her face was kindling at sight of her friends, and her whole appearance was animated and glowing."

The acquaintance thus begun soon ripened into love, and John Opie became the husband of the attractive Miss Alderson. The blue robe in which he first beheld

her seemed to be typical of her usual attire, for in her trousseau we learn that she had a "blue satin bonnet ruse, with eight upstanding feathers; nine small blue feathers and a feather edge; three blue round feathers and two blue Scotch caps," etc.; not to mention a striped gold-gauze bonnet ruse, and other gay apparel. But bright colours seemed to be a part of her own vivid personality; she reminds one, in those early days, of some gay tropical bird that fluttered, carolling, through existence.

Her marriage with John Opie enhanced her fame, while his genius aided and strengthened her own. That her lively, vivacious nature remained unchanged by her marriage, a story which she related at Holkham and which afterwards was mentioned in her life goes to prove. As a young girl she had received lessons in dancing, in which she became proficient, from a master in Norwich, by name Christian. Years after she had married, when she and her husband were staying in Norwich, they accompanied a friend to see the Dutch church. The two men were somewhat long in looking round and making their observations; and Amelia, who had waited for them at the bottom of the church, became very cold. In order to warm herself she began executing a *pas seul*, hopping, twirling and capering gaily; when suddenly her gaze fell upon the pavement over which she was pirouetting, and she stopped abruptly to read the name "Christian" engraved upon the slab at her feet! "I stopped dismayed," she says, "shocked to find that I had actually been dancing upon the grave of my old master—he who first taught me to dance!"

From Amelia Opie pirouetting gaily in a church,

from Amelia with her bright colours, her bonnet with "eight upstanding blue feathers," her passionate love of gaiety and song, her devotion to and popularity in society, it seems a far cry to the quiet, grey-clad Quakeress, which, from having been thrown in the society of the Gurneys when a widow, she became in 1827–8. There seems no connection save the comedy of contrast between the two figures. "What will you do without your Holkham, your singing, your dancing?" wrote a dismayed friend to her on hearing of her intention. But in Norwich the transformation was attributed more to an admiration on her part for Joseph John Gurney, brother of Elizabeth Fry, than from profound religious conviction. Whatever its cause, it unfortunately lost to her much of her individuality, and she produced little of merit subsequently.

This, however, is anticipating events. Amelia Opie's acquaintance at Holkham, by her own showing, was a very slight one before 1800; yet, slight as it was, she was deeply impressed with the charm and beauty of Mrs. Coke. When the latter died, Mrs. Opie wrote a poem to her memory, which is, unfortunately, lost, but its delicate sympathy and pathos created in Coke's mind a warm impression of gratitude towards the writer, and henceforward he never omitted to do any kindness which lay in his power for the quaint, gay little poetess. In 1802, John and Amelia Opie decided to go to Paris, a great event in the life of both, and one to which Amelia looked forward with the keenest excitement; while this excitement was intensified by the fact that Coke, knowing that Fox would be in Paris about the time of their visit, gave them a letter of

*

introduction to the great statesman, whom, at that time, they had never met.

The meeting took place in a curious manner. In her journal, Amelia Opie describes how she and her husband paid a private visit to the Louvre, and her great anxiety to catch a glimpse of Napoleon from the windows of the Gallery at a remarkable moment in his career—the moment when he set forth to open for the first time the Conservative Senate as First Consul for Life. Unhailed by a single shout, Napoleon started on this his first step towards despotic power,[1] but to the unseen, eager watcher at the window of the Louvre the moment was one of bitter disappointment, for she failed to catch a glimpse of the Consul's face as he was borne rapidly past through the silent, apathetic crowd. Turning from the window in keen regret, she was, a minute later, consoled by the sight of a man who had almost as great an interest in her eyes as the First Consul—Fox entered the Gallery.

Mrs. Opie to Thomas William Coke.

"Paris, *3rd of Sept.*, 1802.

"Dear Sir,

"The best return which I can make to you for the kindness which dictated your last letter and led you to send what it contained, is to inform you that it was not executed in vain, but that in consequence of it, Mr. Fox did us the honour of inviting us to dine with him and *Mrs. Fox* last Monday. We had been introduced to him previously, the day after his arrival in Paris, by Mr. Brown (Mr. Whithead's partner), with whom Mr. Opie and I were conversing when Mr. and Mrs. Fox entered the gallery of the Louvre; and we had the great pleasure of going the tour of the pictures

[1] She afterwards described this scene in her novel *Temper*.

with them. I was much surprised at not finding myself, as I expected I should be, awed and confused in a first introduction to a man of such superior abilities, but perhaps true greatness of mind is always accompanied by so much benevolence and unassuming simplicity of manners as to prevent that awefulness which, at a *distance*, one cannot help attributing to distinguished talents. You, who know Mr. Fox intimately, must be sensible that he is in appearance and manner one of ye most simple and unassuming of beings. Would that he would talk more! Dr. Johnson said to him '*that he could afford to be silent*,' but during ye short time I spent with him, I felt that I could not afford he should be so. Mrs. Fox looks like a clever woman, and I am told that she is so, but I have seen too little of her to be able to form any correct judgement of her abilities—all I know is that she is a very agreeable woman, and has a very prepossessing manner.

"Mr. Opie has not yet required Mr. Fox's assistance in any way, else I am sure that, owing to your influence, he would have obtained it on any occasion. We leave this motley scene on Tuesday next, and *I* shall leave it with *reluctance*. My *nationality decreases* every day, but during ye first week I was surprised at its *magnitude*. Still, there is enough left to satisfy ye most violent lover of my country, who shall think proper to interrogate me on ye subject. We met Lord Robert Spencer at Mr. Fox's, and there was something in his countenance which seemed in unison with my feelings and led me to think he might be as national as myself; but I had the mortification of finding when I conversed with him on the subject that *he* thought 'there was living out of Denmark.' However, I ceased to wonder at this when I reflected on his rank in life. Persons of rank and fortune can *even here* command *comforts* as well as luxuries; as we cannot afford the latter, what are we to do (except during a short time) in a country where the comforts of life scarcely exist—at least, they are not native of it, but transplanted

thither in small quantities by ye opulent of other countries for their own use. Then, instead of fine sheets of water, they have fountains in their garden, and orange-trees in boxes, instead of fine spreading trees; and everywhere one sees Roman magnificence and Edinburgh filth. But all this you know as well as I do, and I will quit the subject ere a violent fit of nausea comes on and gets the better of me.

"Yet, I must repeat, I depart with reluctance. The society I leave with regret; but chiefly I regret General Kosciusko[1] and Miss Williams.[2] We have seen Bonaparte, and were very near him. He said to Mr. Fox, as report tells us: 'I am happy to see a man whom I have so long admired; I revere your abilities, but not only for their extensiveness, but because they have always been executed for the good of your country.' You have heard, perhaps, that at the theatre of ye Republic, Mr. Fox was received with loud acclamations, and that 'Bravo Fox!' echoed round ye walls.

"My paper is almost full, but before I conclude, allow me, Sir, to say a few words on a subject which is almost too sacred for me to mention to you. To admire her whom you so justly regret was one of the first lessons which I learnt from my mother. She had not the honour of knowing the amiable being I allude to, but she was an accurate observer, and well able to form a correct judgement of a character from a countenance and the manner; what that countenance and manner were, I need not say; suffice that hearing them praised before I saw them, and by a parent whom I doated upon, it is no wonder that ye first impression they made upon me was indelible; and I eagerly seized ye opportunity which ye poor Duke of Bedford's death gave me without appearing officious (as my acquaintance with your family was a very slight one) to pay my slender but just tribute to

[1] General Kosciusko, "Warsaw's last champion." He was wounded almost to death in bravely defending his country against her invaders.

[2] Helen Maria Williams, a noted writer, especially on political subjects. She afterwards became a strong supporter of the Bourbons.

such departed excellence. I did not the less consider *your* feelings, I only gratified my *own;* but truly fortunate do I esteem myself in having been able to soothe those regrets which I cannot remove.

"5th Sept. Since I began this letter I have heard from my father, and I beg leave to congratulate you on ye event of ye election. I hope to see you in October, but I dare not flatter myself that it will be at Holkham, as my husband is more wild than ever to get home to work again—indeed nothing else could be expected from the effect of ye gallery—how Lady Anson would delight in it!

"I have scarcely room to subscribe myself,

"Your obliged and humble servant,

"A. Opie."

When Mrs. Opie's wish to see Napoleon was at length gratified, she decided that he was the image of Lord Erskine; but gave little further account of the impression he made upon her. Her description of Paris, however, so soon after the Revolution, has a special interest; so also has her account of Fox's reception there. At the meeting between Fox and Napoleon to which she refers, Napoleon paid Fox the most fulsome compliments, to which Fox, who hated flattery, said little or nothing in reply.[1] But when Napoleon

[1] *Life of C. J. Fox*, by Earl Russell, Vol. III, p. 265. The fact of Fox having been thus presented to Bonaparte gave rise to much comment among his party, especially as Sir Francis Burdett, who had visited Paris in May of the same year, and had on that occasion been introduced to many celebrated men of the day, had absolutely declined any introduction to the First Consul, declaring that the friends of freedom ought not by their homage to recognise a usurpation begun by dismissing the representatives of the people at the point of the bayonet. Contemporary papers, however, decided that for Fox, as a future First Lord of the Treasury, it was necessary to be friends with the representatives of foreign Powers, while Sir Francis, the champion of the zealots of popular suffrage, could scarcely recognise the cashier of elective authority.

ventured upon the subject of politics, and began making disparaging remarks upon the English Ministry, Fox was no longer silent. "Il me combattait alors avec chaleur en son mauvais Français," Napoleon complained afterwards; and although Fox in his youth was reputed to be an excellent French scholar, excited by Napoleon's insinuations against his countrymen, he appears on this occasion to have thrown grammar to the winds in his indignant contradiction of the First Consul's charges. Combating them hotly, he finished each refutation by exclaiming peremptorily: "Premier Consul,—ôtez-vous cela de votre tête!"[1]

The dinner to which the Opies were invited by Fox in consequence of Coke's letter of introduction, took place at a hotel in the Rue Richelieu. In the midst of dinner, Fox informed his guests that the hotel had formerly been the private residence of the celebrated Maréchal Richelieu; and, as an illustration of the strange changes brought to pass in times of Revolution, he added that twenty-nine years previously he had been supping in the identical apartment where they were now seated, as the guest of the witty Maréchal, then owner of the house. It was during this visit to France that Fox visited Lafayette at the old and spacious Chateau of la Grange, where the patriot now led a simple and happy life. While there, at Lafayette's request he planted some ivy against the house, on the flourishing plant of which Mrs. Opie related to Coke many years afterwards how she gazed with reverence.

The Opies did not again meet Fox until he came to

[1] *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1839, p. 474.

sit for his whole-length portrait which Coke commissioned Opie to paint. This far-famed picture cost the painter much anxiety; and during the progress of the work he was greatly distracted, as well by the conflicting opinions of friends, who crowded to criticise its progress, as by the impatience of the sitter, who was eager to be released from the annoyance of sitting. Fox, however, sympathised with Opie's uneasiness on the first score, and kindly whispered to him: "Don't mind what these people say; you must know much better than they do!" When the picture was finished, Coke expressed himself extremely pleased with it, and Mrs. Opie says: "I think I may without partiality say it is worthy of the artist, the owner and the original." But Opie himself was dissatisfied, and felt his work had fallen so far short of what he had intended that he begged Fox to sit again; which Fox refused, declaring it to be unnecessary.[1]

At length the day came when the portrait was to be exhibited in the Academy. Opie, arriving late in a state of great depression about his work, missed hearing the almost universal approbation with which the first inspection of it had been greeted. At the dinner he was seated opposite to Fox and Coke, close to Benjamin West, the President, who had succeeded Sir Joshua Reynolds in 1792, and who had been one of the four men chosen to draw up the original plan of the building. Now Benjamin West, himself the son of parents more poor than Opie's own, took—perhaps in consequence of a certain similarity between the respective struggles of their early years—a keen

[1] *Memorials of John Opie*, by Mrs. Opie.

interest in the success of his fellow-artist. As one of the ten children of a Pennsylvanian settler, his first picture had been painted under greater difficulties than Opie's childish portrait of his father. Benjamin West had to shave a cat in order to make his paint-brushes, and he had to beg the red and white pigments used by the Indians from a friendly Cherokee, who afterwards gave him his first lessons in art. His picture, painted under these conditions, was exhibited sixty-seven years afterwards side by side with his *Christ Rejected;* but those early difficulties no doubt enabled him to sympathise with the vicissitudes of art, and hearing from Fox that Opie underrated his own work, he took care to direct the conversation to a discussion of Opie's picture, so that the latter could not avoid hearing the high praise which was unanimously passed upon it. Opie, surprised and gratified, could no longer doubt that the portrait was successful; and Fox, leaning across the table, said contentedly: "There, Mr. Opie, you see I was right; everybody thinks it could not be better. Now if I had minded you, and consented to sit again, you most probably would have spoilt the picture!"

To-day, on either side of the doorway in the Saloon at Holkham, hang two full-length pictures in similar frames of the two great political friends. One is Gainsborough's portrait of Coke, before mentioned, the other, Opie's picture of Fox. Beneath the latter is written:—

A Patriot's even course he steer'd,
'Mid factions wildest course unmoved.
By all who knew his mind, rever'd;
By all who knew his heart, beloved.

CHAPTER XXI

THE DEATH OF FOX

1803–1806

Ætat 49–52

ON March 7th, 1803, the High Sheriff and Grand Jury of Norfolk at Thetford voted an address of congratulation to His Majesty on his restoration to health, and the two Members for the county, Sir Jacob Astley and Mr. Coke, were deputed to present it, which they accordingly did on March 30th.

Over twenty years had passed since Coke, as a youth of twenty-eight, had claimed that memorable audience which had stamped him for ever as an enemy in the eyes of George III, and Time, which had meanwhile dealt generously with the subject, had dealt hardly with the King. Now in his forty-ninth year, Coke was in the very prime of his life and strength; George, on the contrary, with encroaching age and past sorrow sapping his vitality, with the shadow of his terrible malady darkening the years behind and threatening the years before—must have presented an object calculated to excite pity and the respect which is bred of pity. But to Coke, George, however broken and pitiable, was still a power for evil in the land, the primary cause of the nation's distress; the promoter of warfare and

slayer of his fellow-men; the arch-enemy of Constitutional freedom and Ministerial integrity. Deference was due to him as King, pity was due to him as man, but no love could ever be lost between Coke of Norfolk and his Sovereign.

The interview on both sides was one of strained civility, and Coke used to relate that as—no doubt with undue alacrity—he proceeded to leave the royal presence, he encountered in the ante-chamber an extremely conceited Irishman, the O'Gorman Mahon,[1] who was awaiting his turn to be announced to the King. Observing the scant courtesy with which George III had just received the representations of his first Commoner, the Irishman endeavoured to emulate the example of his Sovereign, and brushing unceremoniously past Coke, turned to the usher who was waiting to announce him, and pompously gave his instructions: "Pray, be careful—THE O'Gorman Mahon!" The Usher, winking slyly at Coke, preceded his dignified victim, and announced in a stentorian voice, "*Mr. Ōr-Goman Mahōōun!*"

The majority of the Whigs, however, despite their dislike to the shifty and despotic policy of their Sovereign, were exceedingly sensitive respecting any accusation of disloyalty towards the throne as an institution. Coke always maintained that no one was more genuinely attached than himself to the three estates of the Crown, the Lords and the Commons;[2] while even the less tolerant Dr. Parr resented the

[1] Nicholas Purcell O'Gorman, son of James O'Gorman, of Ennis, who married, in 1760, Susanna Mahon, of Limerick.

[2] See *post*, p. 399.

slightest insinuation to the contrary. Indeed, on one occasion Dr. Parr took an affront of this description profoundly to heart.

It appears that a certain Mr. Manning, a clergyman of the type of which Parr disapproved, but who was personally unknown to him, took upon himself to write to Parr a trivial attack upon the latter's behaviour during a recent Tory election. Either in an excess of loyalty, or with a desire to annoy, Mr. Manning, to use Parr's own description, "*tricked his letter round with an extraordinary decoration*"—in other words, he wrote on the exterior of it a sentence to which Parr took instant exception. As the Doctor in the course of his voluminous correspondence occasionally sent any very trenchant sermon or successful dissertation which he had penned to Coke, in order to rouse the admiration of the latter, he at once dispatched to Holkham an account of this incident, together with the sermon which he had preached upon it the following Sunday, and also, "*A Copy of my letter to Mr. Manning, sent for the perusal of my honoured Friend and Patron, Mr. Coke.*"

> "No doubt," he announced with dignity, "Mr. Manning meant to show his own zeal, and perhaps rebuke me for not having sufficient loyalty. But I would not suffer this affront to lead me into any acrimonious language, and therefore I was content with telling him that such words on the outside of a letter were not very usual or very proper. I suppose he is a weak as well as a warm partisan. If he shows my letter, he will be asked what the words were, and upon stating them, every man of sense who may agree in the politics of Mr. Manning, will *smile* at this unwise and incivil manifestation of

Mr. Manning's zeal.—The unusual words," Parr at last condescends to explain, "which stand round the head of the King on the outside of Mr. Manning's letter, and which were deliberately written by his own hand, are these:

"GOD SAVE THE KING!"

The copy of Dr. Parr's reply to Mr. Manning, on three large sheets of foolscap, which he enclosed for Coke's admiration, is too long to transcribe; but one is led to conclude that the offending Manning was gifted with a sense of humour, for two months afterwards Parr wrote triumphantly to Coke—

"That silly Scribbler, and Pert Busybody, Parson Manning, is completely silenced by my letter!"

Shortly after Coke's interview with George III, however, the health of that much-criticised Sovereign gave renewed cause for anxiety, and Coke received a letter from Fox, forwarded from Norfolk.

Charles James Fox to T. W. Coke.

"St. Ann's Hill, *April 4th.*

"Dear Coke,

"I take my chance of your being at Holkham to direct there. I mean to bring on several motions in the House of Commons beginning about ten days hence, particularly relating to Russia and Ireland and to the general state of defence, besides supporting others that may occur, and therefore if you can attend and get others to attend from the 11th for about three weeks, you will oblige me beyond measure. I find on examination that we can make a far better muster of our *old* friends than I had thought, and both for the party and for myself a good show of *such* is most desirable. I will write to

Edward,[1] but perhaps if you would write, too, it would be best. I was much surprised to hear that you had expressed some doubt of Sir Jacob, but after all that passed at the election I should think it impossible. Would my seeing him or writing to him be of any service? Sir Martin Fowlkes [*sic*] has often voted with us, but we do not know anything of his politicks now? To all these questions I must add another, and that is whether you or any other Norfolk man mean to bring in the Corn Bill or the Malt Duty?

"The weather here is very bad for everything. I hope it is better with you. I have some pigs that Albemarle gave me that are the admiration of all who see them.

"Yours ever,

"C. J. Fox.

"I go to town on the 10th.

"No. 9, Arlington Street.

"I hear bad accounts of the K."

The political outlook was, indeed, far from reassuring. The hope of peace which had cheered the nation had been doomed to disappointment. Towards the close of 1802, relations between France and England had already become strained. Napoleon had demanded the expulsion of certain Frenchmen from England who had spoken against him, and for certain restrictions to be put upon the English Press. Both demands were refused; and in March, 1803, he pointedly insulted the English envoy, Lord Whitworth, in Paris. Meanwhile, by means of secret agents, he stirred up discontent in Ireland; and the panic of invasion again spread through the land.

[1] Coke's brother, Edward Coke of Longford.

Coke, however, on this occasion appears to have turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of Fox, and returned to Holkham; where, that same month, he entertained his old friend Lord Moira, who never failed when in England to pay him two or three visits annually.

Among others, Dr. Parr was invited to meet the statesman whom he had formerly birched with zest, and who was now a tall, stately man with a European reputation, which, in public, he sustained with an impressive dignity of manner.

"I should," Dr. Parr wrote back, "be very happy to form one of the party at Holkham with yourself and the amiable and illustrious nobleman who is with you. He would smile to see a copy of his own Latin verses with some corrections of mine which I found some years ago among my papers, and which I preserve with the same sort of affection and reverence which a good Catholic would feel for some holy and precious relic. It is on a military subject:

cur Ajax, heros ab Achille secundus
Putrescit

I have not seen him for many years, and I was extremely vexed that he did not come the other day, when I dined with the Prince of Wales at Norfolk House, just before I left town. Mr. Fox was there, and our party would have been perfect with the addition of yourself and Lord Moira. I shall rejoice in finding an opportunity to express my thanks to him and to remind him how he used to annoy me by the opposition between his fine coat and his unwashen hands, and to coax me to the correction of the careless parts of his exercises, by referring me to the other parts in which he had been more diligent, and fancied himself more successful. I saw the very early dawn of his genius and his magnanimity, and I was exceedingly provoked at his removal from classical pursuits."

On the 20th April, Lord Moira left Holkham, and about this date various advertisements began to appear announcing the usual public dinners with which Coke's birthday would be celebrated throughout the county on May 6th. Amongst others, weekly in the *Iris* might be seen the announcement of a dinner to be held at the Fleece Inn, Wells, with Martin ffolkes Rishton, Esq., in the chair :—

> "It having been determined that annually, on Mr. Coke's birthday, the Members of the late Yeomanry Cavalry do meet and dine at the Fleece Inn to commemorate the joyful Event and to show the grateful Sence they entertain of his liberal, kind and friendly conduct to them as Major Commandant during the time of their enrolment."

This gratitude was destined to be short-lived, but the dinner took place with great enthusiasm; and within a fortnight of its celebration, war was announced with France, on May 18th.

Now, in view of the expected invasion, the Militia had been embodied on March 11th; and a bill was subsequently passed providing for the enrolment as Volunteers of all men between the ages of seventeen and fifty-five. But although Coke had been active in his services with regard to the Yeomanry Cavalry, he took no steps to forward the Volunteer movement in Norfolk. With Fox and Grenville he believed that Napoleon would not invade our shores; and he inherited the opinion for which it was rumoured that Lord Leicester had paid the penalty with his life—a distinct contempt for the Militia. This he did not attempt to conceal, but spoke of them as "boys playing at soldiers." Neither opinion was popular in Norfolk, where people viewed very

seriously both the prospect of an invasion from Napoleon and the means they were providing for their defence.

Oblivious of wars and rumours of wars, however, throughout this period, Coke appears to have given an undivided attention to agriculture. In 1803 he had a larger gathering than ever at his annual Sheep-shearing, one event of which was a sweepstake won by himself for estimating with more exactness than his competitors the weight both of wool and carcass of the Southdown sheep slain on this occasion. In June the following year he was present at the Sheep-shearing at Woburn, where he cordially invited all the agriculturists and breeders present to come on to his own meeting which was to take place the following week. Such a journey in those days was a serious undertaking, but we learn that—"Many accepted of the invitation, and hastened across the country, a distance of near 120 miles, by every mode of conveyance which the inns or private families afforded; others went round by London, for the convenience of the mails and stage-coaches; and by Sunday Mr. Coke's hospitable mansion at Holkham, and every inn and farmhouse in the neighbourhood, were filled with visitors."[1]

On this occasion it was particularly remarked how—

> "Those who had been in the habit of attending Mr. Coke's 'Clipping' did not fail of noticing the rapid and great improvements which are still making in Holkham Park, and on all the surrounding domain of its truly patriotic owner; and the high state of cultivation into which so very large a tract of land, naturally sterile and barren, has been brought, and

[1] The *London Chronicle* for July 3–5, 1804.

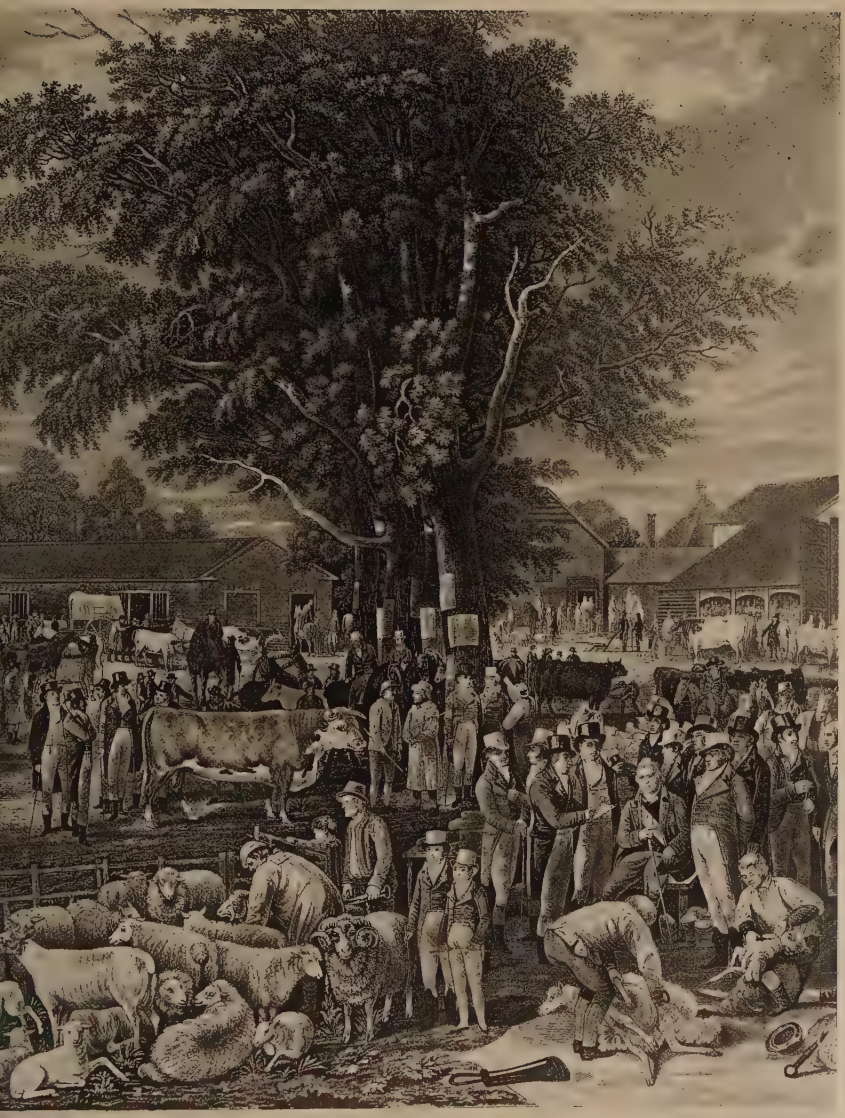
the very fine and thriving plantations which are raising on land which, naturally, produced not a tree of any kind, but was, till within a few years past, a vast plain of chalk, covered only by a few inches of sand, so extremely light that it shifted and blew about like new fallen snow with every wind."[1]

At this Sheep-shearing Coke actually gave a prize for a "fine wether in his wool" of the condemned Leicester breed. In handing the silver tankard, value ten guineas, to the delighted prize-winner, Mr. Charles Money, he remarked slyly, "It can't be in better hands, for, from your known conviviality, we have no doubt but you will fill it before you get home!"

He lamented, however, that the premiums which he had offered the previous year for "*a cup, value ten guineas, to the person who shall feed the greatest number of horses (not fewer than five) with Swedish turnips,*" and "*another cup, value ten guineas, to the person who shall produce the most satisfactory experiments on no less than twenty acres of land, to ascertain the comparative merits of the drill, and broadcast, or dibbling husbandry,*" had produced no candidates; and he then proceeded to state that the premiums for the next year should be the same as the present, with the addition of —*1st, a premium of ten guineas to the shepherd who should on the 1st of June next have reared the greatest number of young lambs, in proportion to his flock; 2nd, a cup value ten guineas for the best Leicester ram; 3rd, a cup, value ten guineas, for the best South-down ram; and 4th, a cup, value fifty guineas, for the best ram of the Norfolk breed, provided it is deemed a good one.*"

[1] *Op. cit.*

From a print in possession of the Duke of Bedford. Mr. Coke is represented conversing with Sir Josep
See fo



HEARING.

dford.

RD.

T. W. Coke

n Sinclair, and Arthur Young, while Professor Davy is standing in a listening attitude behind him.

438.

By the end of the week the guests who had been staying in the house took their departure—the Duke of Bedford, Lords Talbot, Thanet and Bradford, Sir C. Davis, Sir J. Astley and Sir J. Banks, the American Minister, the Swedish Ambassador and many others; and Coke shortly afterwards was called upon to visit Lynn.

A presentation had been prepared for him, of the beautiful silver vase before referred to, three feet high and of exquisite workmanship, which, at a cost of seven hundred guineas, was offered for his acceptance on July 23rd, in the name of the farmers of Norfolk.

Roger Wilbraham to Thomas William Coke.

"My dear Coke, *July 4th*, 1804.

"Lord Albemarle will meet you at Swaffham on the 13th. Ld. Petre, with whom I dined at Thorndon in my way up, will also be at the Wool-Fair at Thetford.

"Pray forward the enclosed to Mr. Dusgate. By his desire I called to see your Cup, which is really a noble piece of Plate, and much better in the execution than I thought it would be from the Design.

"The inscription on it is as follows :—

PRESENTED TO
Thomas William Coke Esqre
of Holkham
by
The Farmers of Norfolk
as
a token of their Esteem for the liberality
of his conduct as a Landlord
and
of their gratitude for the Benefit of his
Example as a practical Farmer
and most valuable member of Society.
June 1804.

"Dudley North, to whom I showed the Inscription just after I got it yesterday, says it is very good, then he added: '*and it says nothing of his Vices!*'

"I really think it a very good inscription; complimentary these things must always be; but this is not fulsome. I will keep my letter open to send you the news, if there is any. If not, I have nothing to add to the Old Story of being most sincerely yours,

"R. WILBRAHAM.

"No news has reached my dull ears!"

Richard Rush, when staying at Holkham in 1819, was much struck by the beauty of this gift.

"Among other massive plate upon the table," he says, "was a large fabric of silver in the form of an urn, highly ornamental. It stood conspicuously as the centre piece, and was a present to Mr. Coke by the inhabitants of Norfolk as a mark of their gratitude for the good he had done the county by improving the condition of its agriculture; and contained many appropriate emblems and an inscription. . . . Among the former was a representation of the mode of cultivating by drill; a Southdown sheep; a Devon cow; and other figures illustrative of improvements in husbandry introduced or successfully practised by Mr. Coke. The inhabitants of the county having at first opposed many of the improvements, and especially on the ground that his innovations trenched upon the labour and comforts of the poor, the inscription embraced an acknowledgment of their error, in terms complimentary to him, and very honourable to them."[1]

This was a tangible proof that much of the former prejudice against Coke's innovations had died down, and that his exertions on behalf of agriculture were at

[1] *The Court of London*, by Richard Rush, p. 100.

PIECE OF PLATE PRESENTED TO T. W. COKE IN 1804
BY THE FARMERS OF NORFOLK

last becoming recognised by the class who had thereby profited most, and been the most slow to acknowledge that profit. Yet one must bear in mind that this tribute of gratitude was given twelve years before the appearance of Dr. Rigby's book, in which the latter speaks of the fierce opposition and misapprehension which Coke was still encountering; while, in 1817, addresses were presented to Coke in refutation of some gross calumnies, "by which his exertions as an agriculturist had been grossly depreciated and misrepresented," and which mention that actual outrage and violence had been, in consequence, offered to him.

The presentation over, Coke appears to have set off on a round of visits; but the good people of Lynn had other designs for him, and had conceived the idea that they would imitate the loyal example of the people of Thetford, by sending an address of congratulation to His Majesty, to be presented by their two representatives. Coke did not attend the assizes, and, whether purposely or not, thus evaded having to appear before George III for the second time within a space of six months, a fact which his mentor, Mr. Rishton, did not allow to pass without lengthy comment. In August, therefore, Sir Jacob Astley had to present the address supported by Mr. Saville, "a gentleman who," as Mr. Rishton severely informs Coke, "*once stood in the Pillory!*" No doubt George greatly preferred the presence of the subject who had been in the pillory to that of the subject whom he would like to have placed there; but Norfolk thought otherwise.

"This, tho' but an unlucky accident," Mr. Rishton wrote again, "is made a great handle of for the

worst of party purposes," and dwelling with great vehemence on the enormity of avoiding the interview with the King, as well as the enormity of despising the Militia, he points out regretfully how the people of Norfolk, "being fully convinced that they shall have to contend with the enemy on their own coasts, would rather have died in your company than in that of any other leader."

Becoming, however, more and more alarmed at the growing unpopularity with which Coke was threatened, and towards which he showed himself so callous, Mr. Rishton wrote yet more urgently, and his letters throw a curious light on both the affection and the temper of Coke's constituents.

"Never," he pleads, "did any Man stand so high in the affections of a county as yourself; never was a Man so possessed of the unanimous voice of a great and respectable yeomanry. I regret to say that they feel indignant at being left without their Chief. They say that in the hour of need, now they are panic-struck and in fear of the enemy, (no matter however foolishly or without cause), you refuse to comply with their wishes to take them under your care, and make them to look their danger in the face. They love you, they even idolise you; and yet you do not yield yourself to their vain fears and wishes. Believe me, they are high spirits, and their passions are very capable of taking a contrary direction. All your Lynn friends are arming. The Yeomanry in your neighbourhood are all hanging aloof in hopes that you will relent. I do not presume to advise. I only state the situation of things as far as regards the Head of our County; I lay before you the sentiments of your truest friends. One line only to say you will take the command of those who wish it, will set you in as enviable a situation as a defender of England, as

you were last August, when the Poll closed, as a Representative of Norfolk. This evening 600 soldiers and 500 seamen volunteered their services for this port only. . . ."

Much more he urged, but, as with the Dissenters, Coke had refused to be bullied into any measure, so neither the thought of public opinion, nor the loss of his popularity in Norfolk, now moved him. Something, however, was due to his friendship for Mr. Rishton, and this alone extracted a grudging promise from him to shorten his absence by nine days, and to be in Lynn on September 6th. Mr. Rishton was far from satisfied.

"You are, I know," he wrote again on August 24th, "destitute of Fear in regard to Invasion, so am I, as to England—but I am concerned to see you so destitute of fear about your popularity in Norfolk. You say you will be here on the 6th. I do not think that if you delay your return till that time that it will be of much moment whether or not you return before the 15th. Every hour is of the utmost importance, nor had you ever any business of half the consequence compared with your speedy return. Were all this clamour confined to your adversaries, I should think it of little importance, but I grieve to represent to you that it is among your best friends that this dissatisfaction prevails, and to an extent that cannot be described. They flattered themselves that they should have had you at their head in all the pride of the Orange interest,[1] they called for you from every quarter, and your having left them without gratifying their ardent wishes, has mortified them beyond all recovery. They have willingly entered into other Corps, because you would not accept their services; they did not ask for Military talents, they only wanted

[1] The Protestant interest.

the countenance of him whom they regarded as the first character in their island, and in whose sight they would cheerfully have encountered every danger."

He goes on to warn Coke that on his return he must be prepared to meet with "cold hands and very cold hearts," even amongst his most zealous friends and former adherents; but Coke appears to have treated the matter with good-tempered amusement; and, in opposition to the conscientious anxiety of Mr. Rishton, a letter received by him the same day from Roger Wilbraham must have struck him as a humorous contrast.

"I had written to you yesterday morning from Lord Rouse's; you will see by that letter that the same incontrovertible argument of the sincerity of your opinion that this country would not be invaded—namely, your leaving Eliza[1] at Holkham occurred to me, as it must to everyone. If your constituents will have you think as they in general do, and act in consequence, they might as well expect you to renounce every political opinion you have ever held, and vote in Parliament as they would wish you, and not as you think, for I verily believe your votes in general have been contrary to the sentiments of the Majority of your Constituents! These arguments one may urge, but blockheads, strenuous in an opinion which they have adopted, they know not why, cannot conceive how anyone can differ with them. Your arrival ten or twelve days sooner than you intended will satisfy your friends, and nothing would satisfy your inveterate opponents!"

Mr. Wilbraham adds that, at Swaffham, one hundred and forty Volunteers had already turned out: "I furnish two volunteers from my own family, and a little

[1] Eliza Coke, aged eight.

money for cloathing, etc., which is as much as can be expected from me"; and he mentions how a friend, who had just come in, had informed him that Sir George Chadd[1] was in "a great panick," packing up all his plate and valuables."

When Coke did arrive, however, he appears to have done his best to soothe the wounded feelings of Norfolk, and to sympathise with a panic which he did not share. He took upon himself the martial character which Mr. Rishton admits "I know you dislike, and which you are least fitted for of any that has been imposed upon you." In September he furnished the Volunteer Infantry at Wells with arms and accoutrements at his own expense; at Holkham a body of fifty men promptly volunteered to serve as infantry under him; later in the month the gentlemen of the troop of cavalry which he was raising were entertained at dinner by him at Holkham. On November 10th he was gazetted Captain of the Holkham Gentleman and Yeomanry Cavalry; and to crown all, on Christmas Day, which fell upon a Sunday, the troops at Lynn were formally presented with "a most elegant banner," worked by Lady Andover herself. No wonder that, the following January, Coke was promoted to be Lieutenant-Colonel of the Western Regiment of Yeomanry Cavalry, and that a pacified public forthwith inaugurated a public dinner in commemoration of all that he had done for the corps! So ended this commotion, which, no doubt, as Mr. Rishton represented, was far more serious than Coke could be brought to understand.

Coke's opinion, however, remained unchanged that

[1] Of Thursford Hall, Norfolk.

Napoleon had no immediate intention of pitting his strength against England, but was anxious to "annoy us with incessant alarms and to weary us by accumulated expence." Apart, however, from this belief in the improbability of invasion at that date, the manner in which he regarded Napoleon, as an individual, can be gleaned from the letters of those who reiterated his views. His friend, Lord Albemarle, it is true, had hung the portrait of the First Consul above his bed, and regarded it much in the light of a patron saint; while to posterity, wise in the knowledge of after-events, nothing seems more extraordinary than the attitude of many of the Whigs of that day with regard to the enemy of their country. Yet a little consideration of the emotions which were then racking all factions, might dispel much of this surprise. England's first war with France had been, literally, a fight of the classes against the masses, undertaken in alarm by the representatives of property to suppress the march of sedition which threatened to annihilate them. To those, as we have seen, who viewed that uprising of the masses as revolution, not sedition—as a revolt against lawless oppression, not a revolt against law and order—Napoleon appeared as the grand solution of a problem. Upon the confusion of men's ideas, his stupendous individuality was brought to bear at the psychological moment. The first secret of his influence was that he posed as the leader of the new order, the man who was to create a new heaven and a new earth out of the chaos resultant upon the destruction of the old régime. To many of the Whigs he was the materialised Spirit of the Revolution—the

champion of Freedom. And it can scarcely be conceded that some of those who, from the first, were opposed to his designs, were in this one whit more clear-sighted than those who accepted his professions in entire good faith. Their opposition was directed far more against the principle professed, than against the man who professed it.

England's second war with France was no longer a war of the classes. England had been personally insulted, and was personally on the defensive. Yet there were many so imbued with the ideal which they had created of that champion of Freedom whose designs England was thwarting, that they refused to recognise their delusion. Napoleon, that mysterious personality, remained a riddle which all could not read alike, and with respect to whose true identity and aims men were prepared to combat fiercely. That Coke shared, with many of the Whigs, the reputation of being a friend to the enemy of his country, is apparent; that it was undeserved there is ample proof. Not only had he been ready to aid in his country's defence, as shown by his correspondence with the Prince of Wales during the former scare of invasion; but if further evidence were needed, it is supplied, as usual, by Dr. Parr, who, echoing the sentiments which Coke had expressed in a letter to him, furnishes proof that some of the most maligned among the Whigs did not hold the opinions which their contemporaries and posterity have alike imputed to them.

> "Calumnies which" (as Dr. Parr points out to Coke) "resounded from the pulpit, from the Bar, and from both Houses of Parliament, which were invented by

Mr. Pitt, aggravated by Mr. Windham, and echoed and re-echoed by hirelings whom they had corrupted, blockheads whom they had deceived, and bigots whom they had inflamed! Ho! it's a glorious and animating spectacle to my mind that the Whigs, so recently and so loudly traduced as Jacobins, have taken the lead at this awful crisis in the defence of this most sacred cause; that men, like you and myself, who were under proscription as infected with French principles, have been experimentally found the stoutest opponents of French Invaders; that we, the subverters of the English Government, are, in the hour of trial, the surest guardians of the English shores!"

In short, at this crisis, as at others, while the Whigs accused the Tories of a spirit of self-seeking and a lack of political integrity, the Tories retaliated by accusing the Whigs of a spirit of republicanism and a lack of patriotism. Each party persistently believed the conduct of the other to be sacrificing the true interests of the country to personal ends; Lord Albemarle always maintained that in Coke's life lay the best refutation of any accusation of self-interest against the party which he represented. Some years later, when the Tories were loudly traducing the Whigs on this account, Lord Albemarle insisted triumphantly—

"I cannot better illustrate the absurdity of this assertion than in the person of my excellent friend. Mr. Coke, I admit, is destitute of place, pension, title, or personal decoration. But, I ask, if he had been disposed to be false to the people, if he had desired to sell your esteem for princely favour, if he had consented to barter away your rights at the shrine of Courtly adulation—if this had been his conduct, *what might he not have commanded?*—I beg

his pardon for weighing him in such dirty scales!—He has attained what no Prince can bestow, no money purchase, and no intrigue contrive—he has attained admiration, respect, and affection."[1]

Meanwhile, in the midst of other political anxieties in 1804, the state of the King's health gave every prospect that a regency would soon be established. If this came to pass, it was understood that Lord Moira, as the Prince of Wales's chief adviser, would be called upon to form a Government; but while that was impending, on April 26th Addington found himself forced to resign, and Pitt formed a Tory Ministry.

The following spring of 1805 witnessed one of the most exciting sessions which Parliament had experienced for some time. The man on whom Pitt had most relied in the Ministry was his old friend Lord Melville; and it was through him that the Opposition found means to inflict a deadly blow upon the Minister. In February, 1805, the report of a Commission of Naval Inquiry reflected upon Lord Melville's conduct as Treasurer of the Navy, and it became at least evident that certain moneys which had been entrusted to his charge for the Navy had been misapplied to other purposes. Mr. Whitbread thereupon gave notice that he would bring forward a vote of censure on April 8th, and it was a question whether Pitt might not have to resign. Coke was with those who condemned Lord Melville's conduct. "The Commissioners," he stated with his usual decisiveness, "had done their duty. By their vigilance a noble lord had been detected in peculation, malversation and every species

[1] *Norwich Courier*, February 7th, 1819.

of conduct that could degrade him";[1] and "as a plain, honest man," Coke said that he voted for that public condemnation. He was of those present in the House at that exciting moment when the Speaker was called upon to give the casting vote. White as a sheet, he gave it—against Lord Melville; and the tears were seen to roll down Pitt's cheek. Although Roger Wilbraham had cheerfully remarked that most of Coke's votes were given in opposition to the wishes of his constituents, this at least met with the hearty approval of the Norfolk Whigs, and on May 14th they accorded him a public vote of thanks for the part he had taken and the votes he had given in the House on April 8th and 10th.

Grenville, Windham and Spencer, who had been constant supporters of the previous war, had now entered into alliance with Fox, who had been its consistent opposer. Windham had declined a place in Pitt's new Cabinet, on the ground that the exclusion of Fox, who had joined in opposition to the weak Ministry of Addington, prevented the formation of a Ministry sufficiently strong to cope with the dangers which threatened the safety of the nation; and he now offered a general opposition to the measures which the Prime Minister proposed. In consequence of this, more friendly relations were established between him and Coke.

In the summer of 1805 a vacancy was expected in the representation of the University of Oxford, which Windham was anxious to obtain, and Coke exerted his influence to secure his friend's success. This fact caused

[1] *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates* (1805), Vol. IV, p. 582.

the deepest satisfaction to Windham, who had always shown himself peculiarly sensitive with regard to the severance between himself and Coke, and he wrote a long and affectionate letter to Coke rejoicing in the restoration of a friendship which, he says, "*I* never considered as having ceased." In consequence of this, a report got abroad that, "in a letter to Mr. Coke, his early and much valued friend, with whom he was once more on terms of political agreement," Windham had renounced the opinions he had held during the time when he had acted with Mr. Pitt. Windham was very indignant at this rumour, and called upon Coke to contradict it, while he apparently tried in vain to recollect in what precise terms he had expressed himself when writing to the latter.[1] The rumour, however, though not strictly accurate, had sufficient foundation to obtain credence throughout Norfolk, and to pave the way for the troubles which followed in 1806. That Windham in the first instance should have abjured his early opinions and gone over to the Tories, might be reprehensible; but that he should apparently prove an apostate to his apostasy, and should turn with open arms to the friends he had denounced was held to be ludicrous. Norfolk did not spare him ample expression of the public verdict on his wavering politics.

Dr. Parr, however, welcomed the return of the prodigal with enthusiasm.

> "Mr. Windham and I dined together," he writes to Coke; "he was in high spirits, we had abundance of literary conversation, and he bore with my freedom when I told him that during his connection with Pitt

[1] Amoytt's *Memoir of Windham*, p. 74.

he had been a total stranger to those intellectual repasts which he had been accustomed to enjoy among the Whigs, and for which he could not have lost his very keen appetite and very excellent relish. Some day or other I shall hope to meet him in the tower at Holkham, and you must pass a decree for the Pipes and Tobacco to be carried up from the lower room to the old and learned library where I must smoak as well as dispute with our Penitent."

All political feuds, however, sank into insignificance before the event which took place in the following October, which, while it stirred England to her foundations, had a peculiar significance for the county of Norfolk. News of the victory of Trafalgar and of Nelson's death filled the heart of every Norfolk man with mingled pride and grief; and nowhere created a more profound impression than at Holkham, where during the years that he had been on shore, 1788 to 1793, Nelson had become a familiar figure. Coke and Windham were both present at the funeral which subsequently took place in St. Paul's; and nine years afterwards, when it was proposed that a public monument should be raised to the memory of Nelson in Norfolk, Coke seconded the suggestion, and he and Miss Coke, together with Lord and Lady and Colonel Wodehouse, headed the subscription with £700.

It was at the funeral of that hero of Trafalgar that the signs of Fox's great fatigue and his failing health were sadly remarked by his friends; but his pluck and naturally bright spirits still fought and conquered the encroaching disease which was shortly to make such fatal headway. It must have been about this date that a report got abroad with regard to his future diplomacy

which seriously alarmed Coke. The latter was told on good authority that Fox was willing to come in under Pitt as Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Whether Coke seriously credited such a rumour is doubtful; but, mindful of Fox's coalition with Lord North, which he had vainly condemned, he now wrote promptly to Fox, telling him what he had heard, and informing him that if there were a grain of truth in that report, Fox and he must separate irrevocably. This, after his previous steady loyalty to Fox, appears to have affected the latter profoundly. He wrote back to Coke immediately, assured him on his word of honour that there was no truth whatsoever in such a report, and that there never should be. Coke preserved this letter carefully, and used it as his authority, both at the time and in later years, for flatly contradicting the rumour.[1]

But this very anxiety about Fox's diplomacy proves that Coke can have entertained little suspicion how near both Fox and his great rival were to the grave. The same year was to witness the death of both; but Pitt preceded Fox by eight months, dying in January, 1806. Grenville then became Prime Minister in the "Ministry of all the Talents," and his acceptance of office entailed that of Fox, who thus became Foreign Secretary. No sooner did Fox find himself in

[1] Unfortunately this letter of Fox's is lost; but Haydon confirms the above story. He says (*Journal and Correspondence*, ed. by T. Taylor, Vol. II, p. 377): "I asked him [Mr. Coke] a question which interested him very much. I had heard Lord Mulgrave say at table it was a fact that Charles Fox would have agreed to come in under Mr. Pitt latterly as Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Mr. Coke said that there was such a report, and he wrote to Fox saying if it were so they must separate. Fox assured him on his honour that it was not so; and he has the letter now."

power, than he wrote to Coke to offer him a peerage. Coke declined, saying that "he felt he could serve his country better as a Commoner than as a peer." Fox thereupon, on February 17th, raised Mr. Anson, Coke's son-in-law, to the peerage as Viscount Anson and Baron Soverton.

The same day Lord Townshend[1] wrote to Coke:—

"Dear Sir, "RAINHAM, *Feb. 17th*, 1806.

"I was sorry to be deprived of the pleasure of seeing you at Rainham as you proposed. I was desirous of expressing to you my admiration of that patriot principle which you recently displayed in preferring to continue the representation of your native county in Parliament to being created a peer. I should have been happy to have acknowledged you as a brother Marquis, yet I cannot but admire such independence, portraying a dignity of mind above all heraldry.

"I hope such principles will be ever justly appreciated throughout the County, and I beg to renew the assurance of my best wishes and support upon the recurrence of the period for elective representation.

"Lady Townshend and all this house unite in best regards to you and the Hon[d] House of Holkham with those of

"Dear Sir,

"Your faithful,

"Humble Servant,

"TOWNSHEND."

While refusing any boon from Fox's administration for himself, Coke, however, sought and obtained one for the county of Norfolk. It was at his request, and

[1] George, fourth Viscount and first Marquis Townshend. He died in 1807.

out of compliment to him, that on July 12th, 1806, the Royal Assent was obtained to an Act which granted as a gift to the county the castle of Norwich, with the county gaol, Castle Hill, and the adjacent land.[1] This fact is now all but forgotten, yet at the time it occasioned great delight throughout Norfolk, and for half a century afterwards was referred to with the liveliest gratitude and satisfaction by all Norwich citizens.

Not every one, however, viewed Coke's disinterested conduct in a favourable light. One dissentient existed, who was determined, moreover, to make her opinion known to him. This was his eccentric cousin, Lady Mary Coke.

Although now eighty years of age, the romantic "Queen Mary" of former days was as sprightly and as peculiar as of yore. "At more than seventy years of age, when I have been in company with her," Wraxall had written some years earlier, "she preserved the cheerfulness and the vivacity of youth."[2] Nor had other characteristics deserted her with advancing years. Her startling taste in dress had survived her younger days; she still was faithful to her favourite pea-green and silver. In 1784, when Lady Mary was fifty-eight, Lady Louisa Stuart mentions how "A loud knock at the door just now has interrupted me, and called me to the window. 'Tis a chaise with a magnificent red and silver postillion, and out of it jumps Queen Mary as magnificent in green and silver!" While, on another occasion, Lady Louisa complains that she had encoun-

[1] *A Narrative of the Proceedings Regarding the Erection of the Leicester Monument*, Bacon & Co., *Mercury* Office, Norwich (1850), p. 49. [2] Wraxall, *Memoirs of My Own Times*, Vol. II, p. 126.

tered Lady Mary "in a riding-dress habit of the King's *dressed* uniform, shining with so much gold, I am amazed the boys do not follow her!" It was doubtless, therefore, in some equally surprising costume that the octogenarian "Queen Mary" drove up in her chaise-and-four to Coke's house in town, one morning in the spring of 1806, and, on some sound pretext, prevailed upon him to accompany her for a drive.

Once, however, she had secured her victim safely in the privacy of her chaise, she turned to him and demanded to know whether the rumour which was afloat that he had again refused a peerage was or was not true? Coke replied meekly that the fact was as she had been told. "You young fool!" was Lady Mary's emphatic comment; and shaking her fist in his face, she proceeded to give him a lecture throughout the remainder of the drive, from which it is to be assumed he derived more amusement than edification.

But with the refusal of that proffered peerage fades the last trace of the link between Fox and Coke. On September 13th, that friendship of nearly thirty years' duration was ended by the death of Fox from dropsy. In spite of a painful and depressing disease, to the last his spirits remained cheerful and his mind clear. To the last, too, the sweetness of disposition, the warm-heartedness, the unaffected sincerity which made him beloved through life showed neither check nor change. And the loss of the man who had been his friend through the whole of his political career was one of the deepest sorrows of Coke's life. "You do not want to be told, my dear friend," he wrote to Dr. Parr, "how deeply I regret poor Fox. I do not only mourn him as

an individual, but as the greatest man in Europe, who might have saved this country from impending ruin, and the shedding of torrents of human blood."

In that political world, even when at variance with Fox's policy, as we have seen, Coke's faith in Fox's integrity and his loyalty to Fox's cause never wavered. In their social relationship, his own stern avoidance of Fox's fatal vice of gambling had never minimised his appreciation of Fox's merits, as it did not stint his generosity when Fox was in necessity as a result of that vice. The similarity between many of their characteristics, their tastes, their views was too strong a link to be lightly sundered. They had, in common, one ideal—the love of and the rights of humanity. With their antagonist Pitt, patriotism was a passion which dominated all other sentiments, and could render him blind to wider issues at stake. With Fox and Coke that larger love of their fellows was cosmopolitan in its all-embracing outlook. England to them was neither infallible, nor sole-existent; but they did not love her less because they loved humanity more. And throughout the stress of public life, throughout the fret of factions, throughout a period when political integrity was all but as suicidal as it had been in the days of the Lord Chief Justice, they remained staunch to that ideal, and to their loyalty to each other. In common, too, they shared one fault—or so their opponents adjudged it—that vehemence of sincerity which offended while it overmastered opposition; and Lord Rosebery sums up a delineation of Fox's character in a paragraph which might almost be a description of Coke himself:—

"The mastering passion of Fox's mature life was the love of liberty; it is this which made him take a vigorous, occasionally an intemperate, part against every man or measure in which he could trace the taint or tendency to oppression; it is this which sometimes made him speak with unworthy bitterness; but it was this which gave him moral power, which has neutralised the errors of his political career, which makes his faults forgotten and his memory sweet."[1]

From the pen of Dr. Parr all Fox's friends now expected a careful and authentic account of his life; but they were doomed to disappointment. Parr produced two not very satisfactory volumes, in one of which, to a series of extracts from the public press, he added an original character of Fox, written in the form of a long epistle to Coke, and which he gravely informed the latter "is copious, discriminating, and animated."

"You will have the goodness," he also wrote to Coke, "to consider this letter quite *confidential*. I have collected and shall re-publish some of the best written accounts of Mr. Fox which appeared after his death, and I have given my own opinion of him in that fair and full way of which you and many other friends are likely to approve.

"Now, Sir, you will gratify me very highly by permitting me to dedicate the work to yourself. I have, in truth, written the dedication, and you will believe me when I tell you that it contains not fulsome flattery, but well-founded and well-earned praise, such, my friend, as will be most acceptable to yourself, and such as is most worthy of the plainness and sincerity which distinguished Mr. Fox."[2]

[1] *Life of Pitt,* by the Right Honble. the Earl of Rosebery (1891), pp. 29-30.

[2] *Parr's Works,* Vol. VII, p. 245.

"I cannot refuse the gratifying compliment you propose paying me," Coke replied, "by dedicating to me your life of Mr. Fox, feeling that I have ever been one of his strictest adherents and warmest admirers; but allow me to say, I hope your kind partiality will not induce you to bestow upon me praise I do not deserve. Let it all centre in that great man, and refer merely to my attachment to him."[1]

"As to the dedication," Parr replied, "be assured, dear Sir, that it will not offend your delicacy. You are too magnanimous to endure adulation, and I am too proud or too honest to offer it. . . . No, Sir, it is contained in one sentence. Your well-wishers will acknowledge the truth of what I say, your worst enemies will not attempt to convict me of falsehood or even of exaggeration. It is impossible for me not to state your attachment to Mr. Fox. It is the very first article, and prepares the mind for what follows."

And none could complain that, considering the pen from which it flowed, the dedication in question was not moderate in tone.[2]

To

THOMAS WILLIAM COKE

The personal and political friend of the late
Charles James Fox,
The faithful and independent representative
of the County of Norfolk,
The judicious and munificent promoter
of Agricultural improvements,
The steady Guardian of Constitutional Freedom,

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 252.
[2] Dedication to *Philopatris Varvicencis,* by Dr. Samuel Parr.

The resolute Opposer
Of Intolerance, corruption, and unnecessary war,
A gentleman in his manners and spirits,
and
A Christian in faith and practice,
The following pages
Are most respectfully dedicated
By his sincere well-wisher
And much obliged Servant

THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER XXII

THE DICTATOR

1806–1807

Ætat 52–53

NOT long after Parr's *Character of Fox* had made its appearance, Coke received a request from the Doctor for a contribution towards a new peal of bells for his parish church at Hatton. Dr. Parr delighted both in bells and bell-ringing, in which latter accomplishment he was a proficient; and he was noted for being able to tell the exact weight of a bell from listening to its tone.

Extract from a letter from Dr. Parr to T. W. Coke.

"I hope that Mr. —— sent you my book, and that you are not dissatisfied with the dedication which I have addressed to you, or with the principles for which I contend upon several important subjects in the second volume. I suppose that you are less displeased than Mr. Windham with what I have said of Mr. Burke.

"The bells to which you so generously contributed are come, and will be hung up in the tower on Saturday se'nnight. Dear Sir, your heart would have been gladdened if you had seen my village festivity on Friday last. More than three hundred of my parishioners assembled. I gave rum and wine for the bettermost of them; the rest quaffed seventy-

three gallons of stout ale out of the tenor bell, given them by myself and my friends. The young folks all had a merry dance in our schoolroom, and they will never forget the day. The Tenor-Bell is named PAUL, and as his namesake preached at Athens, so I made a sermon for Paul of Hatton, and you would smile at the context, but they were very appropriate and very acceptable. The Bishop of Worcester told me at our visitation that you were his schoolfellow, and he spoke of you with great respect. Give my blessing to your excellent daughter. . . . Oh, my Friend, the resemblance of her mind to that of her excellent mother delights me, and may she live to be a comfort and ornament to her affectionate father.

"Believe me, dear Sir, most gratefully
and respectfully,
"Your friend and obedient servant,
"SAMUEL PARR."

Dr. Parr's closing ejaculation was, no doubt, due to the reflection that Coke was now, more than ever, dependent upon the society of the little daughter Eliza, who, as he was never tired of stating, had been his great consolation through the seven years during which he had now been a widower.

Lady Andover, whenever a hostess had been required, had never failed to come to Holkham for the purpose; but on April 16th, 1806, she had married again, her second husband being the brave Admiral, Sir Henry Digby. It is impossible in a limited space to relate half the gallant services of the latter. His prize money had rendered him a wealthy man before he was thirty years of age. He was the hero of the day when Lady Andover married him, and was extremely good-looking. Intellectually, he was, no doubt, her inferior; but one

curious gift he shared with her, at least upon one occasion—her faculty of prognosticating events in a dream.

As he was cruising off the Spanish coast in the *Alceme*, October, 1799, and turning to the southward, at eleven o'clock at night he summoned the officer of the watch and asked whether, to his knowledge, any one had entered the cabin? The officer replied in the negative, and the sentry, when questioned, replied, "No, sir, nobody." "Very odd," replied Digby; "I was perfectly convinced I had been spoken to." At two o'clock in the morning the same question was asked and the same answer given. "A most extraordinary thing," said the captain; "every time I drop asleep I hear some one shouting in my ear, 'Digby, Digby, go to the northward!' I shall certainly do so. Take another reef in your topsails, haul your wind, tack every hour till daybreak, and then call me." The officers thought the captain was mad, but had nevertheless to obey his orders. Soon after seven in the morning the man at the masthead called out, "Large ship on the weather-bow, sir." She proved to be a large Spanish vessel laden with cochineal and spices, and an enormous sum in silver dollars. We were at war with Spain at the time, and she fell a prize to the *Alceme*, Captain Digby, the officers, and crew receiving large sums as their share of the booty; so that the health of the supernatural being who told Digby to go to the north was drunk in many a hearty bumper.[1]

In October, 1806, Parliament was dissolved, and the

[1] The father of the present Lord Digby used to vouch for the truth of this story, and it was well known in the Navy.

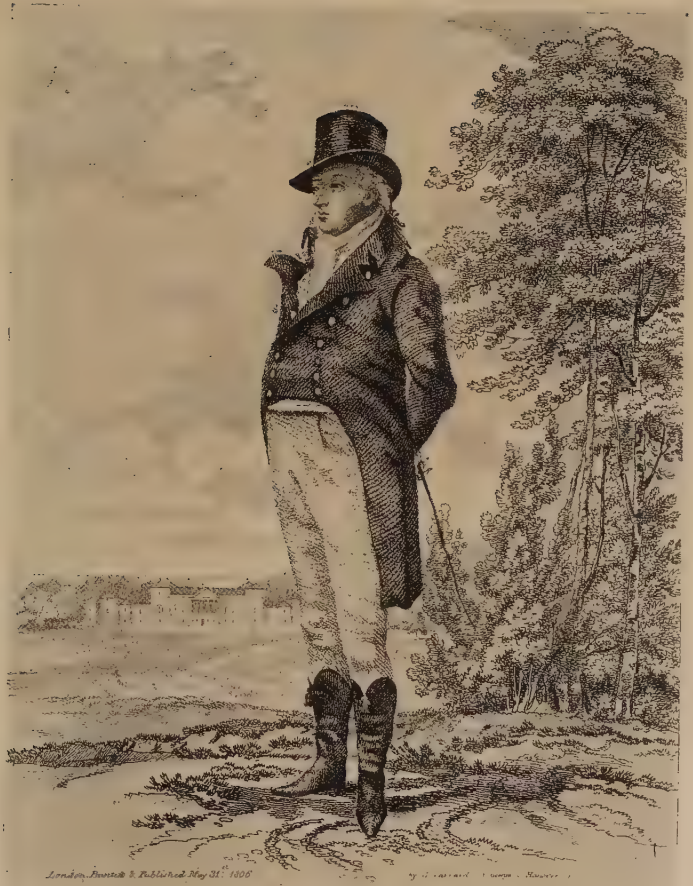
re-election of the Knights of the Shire became necessary.

Coke was very unwilling to re-enter Parliament. In Fox, he said, he had "lost his principal inducement to an active parliamentary career," and with that loss still so recent, still so keenly regretted, "all his feelings and inclinations turned to a private life, which had always been so much more congenial to him."[1] In fact, at first he appears to have refused to stand for re-election; but the representations of the freeholders overruled his wishes; and at length, reluctantly, he agreed to face what, in the event, proved to be the most stormy election in which he had ever taken part.

From the very first there seemed a fatality in connection with it, which made of him a scapegoat for the offences of others—a fact which seems to have occasioned him, on the whole, more amusement than annoyance.

The primary cause of this was his championship of Windham. Coke was essentially no fair-weather friend; since Windham had returned to his party, or, as Windham himself would have preferred to express it, since he no longer found his views to be at variance with those of his early friends, Coke was determined to give him that support of which Windham's change of front left him sorely in need. For Whigs and Tories alike were inclined to look askance at his politics, doubtful to which party he, at heart, belonged, and which apostasy would eventually prove genuine. Therefore, when he decided to stand for the

[1] See *Copy of the Poll for the Knights of the Shire, 1806* (pub. November, 1806).



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THOMAS WILLIAM COKE ESQR

Member of Parliament for the County of Norfolk

(East View of Holkham Hall)

representation of the county conjointly with Coke in the Whig interest, Coke warmly applauded the decision, and promised to exert his own powerful influence to further the election of his friend.[1] "I have been exerting myself for Windham," Coke wrote to Dr. Parr, "and have every reason to believe the Whig interest will completely get the better of the Tory in the county of Norfolk. . . . I assure you I do not intend moving Windham by halves!"

The first contretemps which occurred, in consequence, was with the Townshends. The warm assurance of support proffered by Lord Townshend in his letter of the previous February would certainly have found ample fulfilment but for the interference of Lady Townshend;[2] and the cause of her alienation was not far to seek. James, her second son, a youth who had come of age in September of that year, desired to stand for Yarmouth, for the representation of which Mr. Anson was also a candidate. Windham had promised to procure Lord Grenville's influence in favour of James Townshend; but, apparently, this he neglected to do, and Coke, who knew nothing of his promise, shared the blame of his neglect, as also that of having personally omitted to further the interests of the would-be candidate.

Lady Townshend was determined in character, plain

[1] "In October, 1806, the Parliament was dissolved and Mr. Windham became a candidate for the representation of Norfolk, joining his interest with the very powerful one which his friend Mr. Coke has so long possessed and continues to possess in the county" (Amyott's *Life of Windham*, p. 83).

[2] Anne, second wife of George, first Marquis Townshend, daughter and co-heir of Sir W. Montgomery, Bart. Married 1773.

of speech, and quick in temper. She forthwith wrote to Coke her frank opinion of his conduct.

The Marchioness of Townshend to Thomas William Coke

"RAINHAM, *October ye 19th*, 1806.

"Dear Mr. Coke,

"You cannot doubt our good wishes towards you, and I trust you will do me the justice to say that, upon all occasions, when your interest in the county has been concerned, that we have acted most cordially by you. I mentioned to you our intention of setting up my Son James for Yarmouth, and I told you this for the purpose of having your friends' support there; it was natural to expect it from you; I cannot expect your friends to oppose Mr. Anson, but we have a right to expect that their second votes should be given to our Son James. If Windham has not settled with Lord Grenville our having Government support, he has misled and deceived me; for I very early put this business into his hands, and he cannot possibly expect that our friends in the county will vote for him—if the interest of Government and his friends are against us at Yarmouth. I write to him to tell him this fairly—and depend upon it, we will act up to it.

"You will therefore believe me to be yours,

"*As you deserve*,

"ANN TOWNSHEND."

Unfortunately for Lady Townshend, the above letter had precisely the opposite effect to what was intended. It caused its recipient the most unfeigned amusement; so much so, that to the end of his life he never forgot it, and, at any mention of Lady Townshend, always

referred with undiminished appreciation to her impressive sarcasm—"Yours—*as you deserve.*"[1]

Meanwhile, the determined lady withheld her support from the Whig candidates; visited, and soundly rated Windham; and finally, on October 24th, dispatched a letter to Mr. Hoste, who had tried to enact the part of peacemaker—a letter which, presumably owing to the treachery of that confidant, found its way to Holkham, where it must have caused fresh merriment.

The Marchioness of Townshend to the Rev. Dixon Hoste.

"Dear Hoste,

"As I know your anxiety to hear how we parted yesterday, I give you a line to say that Windham was fully sensible that by *his* neglect we have been placed in the very painful situation we are, in regard to himself as well as Yarmouth; and he was last night to write to Lord Grenville to try if some arrangement could yet be made for that Borough in favour of my Son James. So I have withheld giving Wodehouse any promise.

"In truth, I feel so truly concerned that the Townshend interest should be given against Windham, whom I have a very sincere regard for, that I rejoice in the delay; but, at Lord Townshend's time of life,[3] to see his interest and his friends deserted by the Government and others who ought to support him, calls for my best endeavour to uphold both his consequence and the interest of his family; and as long as I am mistress of this house, please God, I will do it. This is my object, and in this you, my good friend, in conscience will agree with me in thinking it right for me to do.

"In regard to Coke, no blame can be alleged, for no requests were made. I have only my own folly to

[1] A pencilled memorandum to this effect is still legible on the back of the letter. [2] He died in 1807.

reproach in thinking that when he knew my Son James was to stand, that he would have preferred him to Mr. Jarvis.

"I trust, my good friend, you will not have suffered by your most kind desire to keep us all right; and be assured that I shall ever remember it with gratitude and sincerity.

"Shall be very happy to hear that dear Mrs. Hoste is better. I have sent two books; if she has not read them they may amuse. Our kindest love and good wishes from us to you all, and I am, dear Hoste,

"Yours heartily and sincerely,
"A. TOWNSHEND.

"FRIDAY, *October ye 24th*, 1806."

The bitter reference to Coke, and the contrasting heartiness of her attitude towards Mr. Hoste, almost suggest a hope on the writer's part that her letter might be shown to the object of her animosity. Be this as it may, the other members of her family viewed with unconcealed dismay the prospect of the Townshend interest being diverted from Coke. Colonel Townshend,[1] who explains that he was so ill he could scarcely write, yet struggled to pen a few lines to Coke to explain his distress—

"I cannot express to you," he said, "the uneasiness and mortification I feel at learning that there is a possibility of the Rainham interest being given against you and Windham, in consequence of some foolish squabble with the Government respecting Yarmouth. You will, of course, not want any support of the kind, your success, I presume, being past a doubt. Yet it will be truly mortifying to me to see the Townshend interest so misapplied, and if it is so,

[1] Second son of first Marquis Townshend, born 1757, by his first wife Charlotte; sometime M.P. for the University of Cambridge.

it will be doubly painful to me in particular to find Lady T. so unreasonable as I must say she appears to be on this occasion. . . ."

History does not relate how the feud ended; whether Lord Townshend was allowed to give his votes to his old friend, or whether Lady Townshend ruled otherwise; but, meanwhile, Coke had become aware that he had to face an opposition which, both in its commencement and its continuance, was a more serious matter than any temporary alienation of the Townshend interest.

His championship of Windham had been received with astonishing disfavour in Norfolk. It appears that Windham was unpopular in the county, and, since his change of politics had weakened his interest with both factions, his present candidature was almost equally unpalatable to both. That public advocacy of his cause was opposed to Coke's own interests is obvious. Coke's own election was secure, and to rouse opposition by his conjunction with a man whom the county rejected was to court a contested election, and to incur incalculable expense and trouble which he could have avoided.

This was pointed out to him in a printed bill:—

"1st. That you being readily chosen by a majority of the county, are, and have been opposed by none.

"2ndly. That you are the principal in the contest.

"3rdly. That the Candidate whom you support is altogether distasteful to the County, and would not, but for that support, have the smallest means of creating the confusion which every peaceable and virtuous man deplores."

Moreover, there existed in Norfolk a curious ideal of fair play. That Coke, from his position and influence

in the county, had a right to be one of its representatives was recognised to be as reasonable as it was inevitable—so much the Tories themselves conceded; but Whigs and Tories alike were inclined to agree that, since there were two factions in politics and two representatives to be elected for those factions, it was but right that each party should choose one candidate, and thus both share and share alike. That, on the contrary, one faction should desire to monopolise all the representation for the county was open to a charge of rapacity—even a desire to tyrannise—which neither cared to incur. Hence it was clear to all just-minded men that, Coke's own election being a foregone conclusion, Colonel Wodehouse, the Tory candidate, had a right to come in a good second; while Windham represented the unfair overplus which all were inclined to resent.

Coke, apart from his friendship for Windham, held opposite views. When he retired from public life he explained that his only object in having stood so often for election had been "to see Norfolk represented by two members who followed the principles of Mr. Fox. I have stood forward more than once," he stated, "when my own election was secure, for this express purpose. . . . I could not bear to see Norfolk represented by one Whig and one Tory, and I have always said—rather than be so misrepresented, if you can't get two Whigs, take two Tories, *who will fleece you well.*"[1]

This point of view was perhaps too abstruse for the Freeholders, as was the independent tone which Coke, as usual, adopted.

[1] *Norwich Mercury*, May, 1831.

"Mr. Coke," we are told, "said that he should not trouble Gentlemen with *professions*. His principles were the same as they had ever been;—they were the principles of the Constitution. He was never one of those to attempt to gain a single vote by compulsory means, either directly or indirectly, for he would not give a fillip of his finger for the suffrages of the Freeholders if he could not have their hearts at the same time!"[1]

The Tories, however, seized eagerly on his advocacy of Windham to impress upon the Freeholders that, spoilt by their adulation, Coke was dictating to them with regard to their choice of the second candidate—conduct both grasping and autocratic. Coke, they reported, made it his boast that if he were to put up an old goat for election, so great was his influence in the county that he would get that goat into Parliament against any candidate on the Tory side. He was represented on a poster as a colossus striding across the county of Norfolk; while, in support of this idea, they nicknamed him the "Dictator of Norfolk," "King Coke," or the "King of Norfolk"—names which were never afterwards allowed to drop, and which did duty at every subsequent election. "Does Mr. Coke take the Freeholders for a pack of hounds that are to be whipped up to the sound of Hark Wind-him when he chuses to give them the View-hullo?" demanded one indignant yeoman in a long article called "A Card to Coke." "If he does, he will find they are the true faithful English Bull-dogs, and not of the Foxhound breed." And even the more moderate lamented that while to Coke, the public benefactor of

[1] *Copy of the Poll for the Knights of the Shire*, November, 1806.

the county, the first votes of Norfolk Freemen were due, they could not remove from him his only foible, that of wishing to return the second candidate also from his own party. One high-flown versifier sadly compares Coke's conjunction with Windham to the fall of Lucifer:

> Oh, Coke, thy fame *was* great, thy generous soul
> Should ne'er have stooped to Windham's fierce control;
> Lur'd by Ambition, heaven's bright Angels fell,
> And scath'd by lightnings, cursing sank to Hell!

Further, a gigantic PROCLAMATION was posted up in Norwich, beginning—

"WE, THOMAS WILLIAM, by Our own presumption PERPETUAL DICTATOR of Norfolk," and which announced among other statements, that—"Windham has humbled himself to our WILL, he has supplicated our PARDON; as a penitent Sinner WE extend to him our Protection and Support, and WE shall not state the reasons for OUR DECISION." It concludes: "Done at Holkham, in the 5th year of our REIGN, THOMAS WILLIAM, PERPETUAL DICTATOR."

"My Dictatorship," said Coke, "was that when I united with any gentleman I did my best to support him!" and although it appears from some letters of Lord Albemarle's that he resented the attitude of the Freeholders in this matter, he could yet appreciate the wit of which he was the victim. "The name 'Dictator,'" he said good-humouredly, "was given me in an exceedingly well-written bill, the author of which I could not discover for five or six years. It was the cleverest thing I ever read, and did him much credit!"

Both factions, however, were busy exercising their

ingenuity, and since, in few elections, has party spirit run more high, in few have the squibs been more numerous and biting. Windham was named William Weathercock, and an enormous placard was posted about the town announcing—

"WONDER OF WONDERS!

"Just arrived in Norfolk and now exhibiting under the Patronage of the Perpetual Dictator, the renowned

WILLIAM WEATHERCOCK

To be seen alive on Thursday next at Mr. Pid-Coke's Menagerie on the Castle Hill, Norwich.

"A wonderful animal of the Camelion kind.

"No animal of this species has ever shown such remarkable qualities. It *changes colour* not only upon any ground, but frequently upon none at all, and has been known when angered by the populace to become invisible for some time.

"The tongue of the creature is the longest of the kind ever seen. It was exhibited on the day of Nomination, and will be again drawn out by its Keeper on Thursday next," etc. etc.

One pamphlet announced that there was about to take place, "*A new and interesting experiment upon the Norfolk Gulls*," while an advertisement was issued for "*A few Norfolk sheep used to carry bells, to keep the Colonel's Flock together—as some are missing every day!*" But perhaps the most successful of all was the announcement of some imaginary "Sweepstakes" in the "Norfolk Races" which were to be run by the three horses Dictator, Weathercock and Perseverance [Col. Wodehouse], followed by a description of each horse;—which admitted that "the Dictator was a beast of some merit," and in the "chace has always been up to the fleetest

hounds, particularly in the chace of the Fox," and that if, on this occasion, "he prove unsuccessful, he is to be condemned to pass the remainder of his life attached to the plow and harrows at Holkham." Weathercock it described as very vicious and apt to *swerve from the course*, and deprecated his having been in training under 'The Dictator'; while Perseverance, among other merits, had had the "advantage of being formerly under the care of the excellent training-groom, William Pitt."

The other side retaliated by stating that the announcement of the race had been inaccurately given, and by correcting it daily as the poll progressed. On the first day we are told that—

> "Dictator, alias High Flyer, was rode by Frank Applause, Weathercock by Common Sense, and Perseverence by Will Humbug, *alias* Stupid; but . . . Dictator was no sooner mounted than, as usual, he took and kept the lead the whole day without variation. It is to be noticed that no other lad could ride this horse, and under his management we believe the full extent of his paces is not yet known.
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> "Previous to the last Norfolk Sweepstakes, Dictator, being in high exercise, the knowing ones tempted him with a coronet wrapped up in the form of a cordial ball. He started at the attempt, but happily Frank kept his seat."

The poll lasted six days, and during that time there were thirty-five houses open in Norfolk for Mr. Windham and Mr. Coke's friends, and sixty-five for the friends of Colonel Wodehouse,—the latter, the *Globe* of November 14th announces, reached from the "Lame Dog" to the "Bear and Ragged Staff," while the former comprised the space lying between the "Adam and

Eve" and the "Hog in Armour";—a manner of defining distance which is less surprising when we learn that during those six days, every public-house within the area mentioned was open to the electors, and "beer flowed like water."[1] From every part of the county people flocked into the city. Voters who did not drive to the poll in the conveyances provided by the candidates, rode into Norwich upon their horses with their wives behind them in a pillion saddle, or else journeyed thither in a lumbering stage waggon which progressed at the rate of three miles an hour. The usually quiet city presented a spectacle of crowded streets, perpetual excitement and occasionally terrifying uproar, which was inevitable in the state of almost universal drunkenness prevalent amongst the lower classes. Meanwhile, as the numbers were declared at the close of each day's poll, it became evident that Coke's success was ensured.

Unfortunately for his interest, however, the zeal of his friends defeated their own object. An electioneering incident, which greatly annoyed the Whigs, was the factor in this unexpected result. During the progress of the poll, two widow ladies, a certain Mrs. Berney and a friend, paraded the town in a barouche. They both dressed in the Colonel's colours, while the carriage in which they sat, the horses, and the coachman and footmen were lavishly decorated to correspond, so that they presented the appearance of being part of a travelling circus. Day after day they drove up and down near the hustings, or joined in the procession of

[1] Recollections of a Centenarian. Peter Pentney, who died in Gresenhall Workhouse.

voters, attracting general attention, and calling enthusiastically upon all within hail to "Vote for the Colonel!" For a time the Whigs bore this with contemptuous tolerance, contenting themselves with remarking—

> His Brazen-faced widows in state may parade,
> And the rabble amuse with a Flag and Cockade ;
> Such Toys may be relished by Wodehouses' folk,
> But can ne'er win a voter from Windham or Coke!

At length their patience evaporated. At a late period of the poll they called upon Coke and Windham, and proposed that a burlesque imitation of the obnoxious carriage should parade through the town, sporting the Whig colours. Both Coke and Windham joined in discountenancing the suggestion, and having done so, had no suspicion that the project was not abandoned.

Such was very far from being the intention of the irate electors. Before mentioning their project they had already been to the expense of securing all the paraphernalia necessary for carrying it into execution, and they had no intention of being baulked of their fun. Therefore, without again mentioning the matter to the two men most concerned, they went forward with their designs. A barouche had been secured with horses like Mrs. Berney's, a coachman and footman the exact counterpart of hers, while two women, bearing sufficient resemblance to Mrs. Berney and her friend, undertook the part of the principal actors. This equipage was forthwith decorated extravagantly in the Whig colours, and the two women were dressed up into excellent caricatures of the two widow ladies, so

that the whole, admirably executed, presented the most ludicrous copy of the other carriage and its occupants.

Suddenly, in the middle of the day and in sight of some thousands of spectators, this burlesque carriage appeared upon Castle Hill. For a moment the crowd were perplexed, unable to determine whether this was, or was not, the vehicle they had grown accustomed to see daily. As the truth dawned upon them, the greatest commotion arose. Half the rabble were convulsed with merriment, while the other half were equally convulsed with rage. The Whigs greeted the burlesque with uproarious delight, and the Tories prepared for revenge. Meanwhile Coke, unconscious of what was taking place, was driving quietly up the hill in company with Windham, when a friend waylaid him to inform him that it was reported some riot was taking place near a certain inn, and that Mrs. Berney had been attacked by the mob. Coke, who was forced to proceed without delay to the Shirehouse, begged Windham to go at once to the place indicated and put a stop to any disorder. Windham, upon arriving at the place mentioned, found everything peaceful, and unable to hear of any disturbance, was returning towards the hill, where suddenly he perceived the burlesque carriage, surrounded by a mob who were pelting it with stones. Thinking it was Mrs. Berney's own, he rushed forward to her protection, but on discovering his mistake he contented himself with trying to appease the mob, and went on to the sheriff's room.

Scarcely had he departed, than the Tory mob, having taken possession of the offending carriage, hurried it in triumph down to the market-place. There, with

shouting and imprecations, they hacked it to fragments. The terrified performers, bruised and dishevelled, escaped with difficulty; and not the least extraordinary part of the performance was that Mrs. Berney's own footman, who had come to look at the riot, was mistaken for his counterfeit, and after a severe beating, narrowly escaped with his life.

When Coke heard of what had taken place, he was, naturally, exceedingly annoyed. It was useless stating that he had been ignorant of the matter, since it had been perpetrated on his behalf by his adherents. On November 11th he headed the poll with 4118, while Windham scored 3722, against Colonel Wodehouse with 3365; but the unfortunate episode which had marked the close of the poll was not allowed to be forgotten. The Berney family were indignant at what they chose to consider Coke's action in the matter, and Mrs. Berney's son prepared a petition to the House of Commons, in the names of himself and his friends, against the return of Coke and Windham. This they were obliged to ground upon alleged offences under the Treating Act, although the true cause was known and was expected to carry weight in the verdict.

Windham thereupon wrote a long letter to the Lord Chancellor (Lord Erskine), in which he warmly defended himself and his friend from the imputation which had been cast upon both. It had been suggested that previous to the canvassing Coke had in some manner given offence to Mrs. Berney, and this Windham indignantly denied: "It is not, as you know, in Coke's nature to ridicule any one. I could not name a man who has less of the habit or less of the disposi-

tion." And he related in detail what had taken place at the election, laying stress on his own and Coke's surprise at hearing of the occurrence, and Coke's instant anxiety, on learning that a riot was imminent, to protect Mrs. Berney from the consequence of her too aggressive canvassing.[1]

But when it had been ascertained that all three candidates had pursued the same course of lavish entertaining towards the voters, that fact was decided to come within the scope of the Act; and on March 4th, 1807, a Committee of the House of Commons declared that Coke and Windham were not duly elected; while Colonel Wodehouse, against whom no petition was brought, retained his seat.

Upon this Edward Coke, of Longford, resigned his seat for Derby and stood for Norfolk in his brother's room, while Coke was elected for Derby in Edward's place, Windham, meanwhile, securing a seat for New Romney.

This general exchange of seats left matters very much the same as they were before the petition, and occasioned universal amusement. On the day of Edward Coke's election for Norfolk, Coke rode with his brother through Norwich, accompanied by Sir Jacob Astley and Windham, and followed by such a concourse of people that the cavalcade resembled a triumphal progress. An eye-witness relates that the procession stretched from one end of the city to the other. "Indeed, the unseating of our old Members has been much more like a triumph than a defeat to the Whig

[1] *Diary of the Right Hon. William Windham*, edited by Mrs. Henry Baring, pp. 470–1.

party, for the accusations of ministerial influence were disproved, and the treating was as much on one side as the other. Mr. Coke's open, benevolent countenance had an expression of drollery in it when he was waving his hat for his brother, as much as to say, *This is quite new and diverting!* To add to the effect, their bare heads were all covered with snow, which fell very thick just at the time of the chairing. I could not squeeze into the Shire Hall to hear the speeches."[1]

Amelia Opie to Thomas William Coke.

"My dear Sir, "*Monday, 9th of March*, 1807.

"As I have not seen an order of the House to take you into custody, I conclude you are at your house in Park Place—whither therefore I shall direct my congratulations to you on your return for Derby in so satisfactory a manner, and also for your second triumph in our native county—what *ideots* [*sic*] certain people are!

"They have contrived to increase your interest by their manœuvre when they meant to weaken it, and to thicken and repeat your laurels when they meant to blight them!

"And may such always be the result of conspiracies so disgraceful! Nor can I believe that the adverse party can rejoice at having been the means of returning to Parliament without *opposition*, a man whom they *hate* and *despise* (if the two feelings can exist together!)

"I hear there was something *very arch* in *your* expression when you rode in at the head of your freeholders, but that Mr. Windham did not look quite so amiable. Probably he had a *remation* [*sic*] (as Mr. Conway or Miss Prescott would say) of the near approach of a Serjeant-at-arms.

[1] *Three Generations of English Women*, by Janet Ross. John Murray, 1888, Vol. I, p. 17.

"I wonder I can feel at all disposed to be cheerful while writing to you, as I am broken-hearted at the ill success of the print, but I expected it—a colourless, grave, and black and white representation of you, could never please the Norfolk farmers. I have much to say on this subject, but dare not say it, so I hasten to do myself the honour of assuring you that I am,

"Your obliged and faithful servant,

"Amelia Opie."

The expenses of this dual contest were extremely heavy, and fell far more severely upon Coke, who might have avoided them, than on Windham. The latter begged Coke to allow him to share equally in the matter, but this Coke, with his customary generosity, refused. In the General Election which followed within three weeks of the decision of the Committee of the House of Commons, Coke and Sir Jacob Astley were elected without opposition for Norfolk.

So ended the stormy election of 1806, after which Mrs. Berney was always known in Norfolk as "The Electioneering Mrs. Berney." That Windham's election for the county had been dependent upon Coke's support was generally recognised; and Bathurst, Bishop of Norwich,[1] bears evidence to this in a letter to Lady Tryphena Bathurst, written on November 26th, 1806:—

"Your opinion of Mr. Windham appears to me to be perfectly just. He is very unpopular here, and nothing but the irresistible influence of Mr. Coke could have secured him success.

"You must not imagine that Mr. Coke's influence arises merely from his very large property; no such

[1] Born 1744, died April 5th, 1837.

thing—it arises from the most honourable of all causes, from the attachment borne to him by all ranks of people, on account of his benevolence, his liberality and the ingenious frankness of his disposition. I confess myself to be among his admirers, partly for the sake of his late wife and her family, but not less for his own."[1]

It is impossible to pass over this period of 1805–6 without pausing to dwell upon the acquaintance of Coke and Bishop Bathurst, which at this date ripened into a deeper friendship. Soon after his appointment to the Bishopric of Norwich, Bishop Bathurst paid the first of many visits to Holkham, which he signalised in an unfortunate manner. Opening a door by mistake, he fell down a flight of cellar steps and nearly fractured his skull. The Bishop, who was a particularly abstemious man, remarked regretfully, "It would have made such a *much* better story if I had been a jolly wine-bibbing Bishop!"[2]

His acquaintance with Coke had begun in the following manner. Mr. Master, of Cirencester, who married a Miss Dutton, a sister of Mrs. Coke, was an intimate friend of the Bishop; and when the latter was Canon of Christ Church, Mr. Master held the living of Witchingham in Norfolk, which gave him a vote for the county. Previous to an election, Coke happened to be staying at Cirencester on a visit to Mr. Master, who, in the course of conversation one day, asked him if he knew Dr. Bathurst. "No," said Coke, "I know

[1] *Memoirs and Correspondence of Henry Bathurst, Bishop of Norwich*, 1853, by his daughter, Mrs. Thistlethwaite, p. 172.

[2] *Memoir and Correspondence of Sir James Edward Smith*, ed. by Lady Smith, Vol. I, p. 578 (where the date is wrongly given).

nothing about him." "Then you ought to know him," said Mr. Master, "for Mr. Philip Wodehouse, a Prebendary of Norwich, wrote to canvass him for a relation of his, and Dr. Bathurst's answer was that, 'if only Mr. Coke had applied to him on the same subject he would have met his wishes.'"

Upon this, Coke, in passing through Oxford, called on Dr. Bathurst. Apparently the servant was not at hand to answer his ring, and after waiting some time the door was opened by a man in shirt-sleeves, who looked very dishevelled and heated. "Is Dr. Bathurst at home?" inquired Coke. "*I* am Dr. Bathurst!" was the unabashed reply. "I have been driving my boys' hoops round the garden with them!"

The Bishop, who was one of thirty-six children by one father and two mothers, was a man of ability and of liberal opinions. Indeed the very broadness of his outlook, which endeared him to his friends, barred his way to promotion. "On account of his liberal opinions," we are told, "he was a marked man—he was the advocate of the rights of mankind, of the liberties of the people. He had near relations in the Cabinet, and much which under other circumstances would have made his promotion inevitable." Coke's own opinion of him was that "he had principles which would carry him to another world, but would not serve his interest in this. . . . Such a character as the Bishop of Norwich was not to be met with on the whole bench of Bishops. He had been the true shepherd and father of his flock. He loved his country and was a faithful servant to his God."[1]—At the Sheep-shearings one of

[1] *Norwich Chronicle*, November 26th, 1830.

Coke's favourite toasts was "The Christian Bishop—the Bishop of Norwich."

In short, "The Bishop is incomparable," pronounced Sydney Smith; "He should *touch* for bigotry and absurdity!"[1] But the great bond of union between Coke and the Bishop was the desire to promote religious tolerance and its complement Catholic Emancipation. The Bishop was as determined and as disinterested in the adherence to his principles as was his contemporary Dr. Parr, but he showed none of the fiery zeal of his ecclesiastical brother. His temperament was amiable, his religion essentially that of goodwill to all men, and, as such, appealed to Coke's peace-loving nature. On more than one occasion Coke exerted himself ineffectually to procure preferment for his friend; and once when the Duke of Bedford was staying at Holkham, the latter told the Bishop that the Archbishopric of Dublin had actually been twice erroneously supposed to be vacant and been designed for him. On the first occasion, in 1806, Fox, who knew the Bishop from Coke's report, wrote to the Duke as follows:—

"Dear Bedford,

"I understand Ager is dead, you must make the Bishop of Norwich Archbishop of Dublin. I shall hear of no excuse; he is the only tolerant Bishop.

"Yours,

"C. J. Fox."

Coke only succeeded in his purpose when the Bishop considered himself too old to accept the result of these

[1] *Memoirs of the Rev. S. Smith*, by his daughter, Lady Holland, 1855, 3rd edition, Vol II, p. 228.

good offices; all earlier attempts at benefiting him failed as signally as had Coke's less ambitious efforts on behalf of the other broad-minded Churchman, Dr. Parr. However, sharing as they did both the glory and the disabilities of their tolerance, the Bishop and Dr. Parr, outwardly dissimilar in temperament, had certain other characteristics in common. Both were gifted with a sense of humour, which, in the case of the Bishop, was not shrouded beneath the pompous mannerisms affected by Dr. Parr. The Bishop, indeed, was excellent company, and as fond of anecdote as was Coke himself. He stood that crucial test of being able to appreciate a joke at his own expense, and used to relate with relish how his *borrowed wig* nearly fell at the feet of George III when he kissed hands on his appointment to the Canonry of Christ Church.

The Bishop and the Doctor, moreover, were both of a sociable disposition, and while Parr delighted in nothing so much as dividing his leisure between his friends and his long meerschaum pipe, Bathurst was never so happy as when indulging in a quiet game of whist with congenial companions. "Parr," he observes in one of his letters to Coke, "seems pleased that his High Church opponents could bring forward no charge against him but his love of smoaking. I do not feel quite so confident but that my attachment to Whist is, among other faults, objected to me by persons of the same description, whose dislike never has and never will give me a moment's uneasiness!"

But out of this harmless pastime of the Bishop there arose an extraordinary scandal. One of the complaints which his enemies were fond of making against him

was that he was too lax in admitting candidates for Ordination. One year he ordained a young man who had previously been refused by Blomfield,[1] Bishop of Chester, and who at once returned to the diocese of the latter and began to officiate. Bishop Blomfield complained to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who reprimanded Bishop Bathurst; whereupon the latter explained that he had been totally unaware that the young man had been rejected by his brother prelate. There the matter would have ended; but towards the close of the year the *old Times* newspaper got wind of the occurrence, and out of it evolved an extraordinary *canard*. It was said that the Archbishop, at the instigation of Blomfield, had written to reprimand Bathurst for *wasting his evenings in playing a rubber of whist,* which the *Times* pathetically represented him as doing "more for the benefit of his poorer fellow Christians than his own," i.e. that he gave away his winnings to the poor. The affair created an extraordinary sensation, and roused such ill-will against Blomfield that Archdeacon Bathurst, the Bishop's son, came to ask Coke's opinion with respect to what had better be done under the circumstances. Coke advised him to contradict the story publicly and to give the real facts, which, therefore, he did, and refuted this strange calumny against Bathurst.

Nevertheless, there were many who continued to believe that Blomfield had actually complained of Bathurst playing whist too often—especially of doing so in public at Holkham—but that Blomfield, who had

[1] Charles James Blomfield. Born 1786. Took degree of D.D. 1820. Appointed Bishop of Chester 1823, and Bishop of London 1828.

the credit of not being very consistent,[1] had been forced to retract his complaint. One day, Coke happened to be present at a public dinner at Chester, at which he found himself seated next to Dr. Currie and opposite to Bishop Blomfield. During the course of the dinner, Blomfield, turning to a dish near him, inquired facetiously from Dr. Currie whether he *should help him to some of his name?* "Yes," quoth Dr. Currie pointedly, "for it's better to eat one's name than one's words!"

In 1812, when Bishop Bathurst visited Ireland, he was presented by the Irish Catholics with a tablet on which is inscribed an address thanking him for his efforts in support of religious liberty. This he afterwards gave to Coke with a plate annexed describing how it was given by him as a mark of personal attachment, and as a tribute to Coke's uniform zeal during the course of a long life in the cause which they both had at heart. Coke hung it up in the chapel at Holkham, and Roscoe afterwards wrote an appropriate inscription in verse which was placed under it.

The Bishop's great intimacy with Coke gave rise to the impression that he was a too eager politician, but while anxious to promote religious toleration, he was actually opposed to a clergyman ever taking any active part in party strife; and, in refuting a charge to the contrary, he gives an interesting testimony to the fact, before pointed out, that Coke's own political energy was due solely to the force of circumstances.

"I certainly," he writes, in May, 1807, to Lady

[1] "Condemned for fickleness of opinion and infirmity of purpose" (*Lincolnshire Herald*, August 11th, 1857).

Tryphena, "have an affection for Mr. Coke's private character, and esteem the disinterested consistency of his public conduct; but to the best of my recollection, *I hardly ever heard him converse upon political topics*, beyond those connected with the County of Norfolk."

His admiration for Coke grew with the length of their acquaintance. His daughter, Mrs. Thistlethwaite, relates how his "friendship and attachment [for Coke] continued to increase if possible every hour," and always in his correspondence he refers to his friend as "the more than noble owner of Holkham," or "Coke, whom you know I value more than any other man."

When Shee[1] sent his portrait of the Bishop to the Academy, Coke, who was present at the annual dinner given to the patrons of the exhibition, asked the artist if the portrait had been painted for any particular person? Shee replied, "Yes, for myself; I paint for my bread." "Then send the picture to Holkham," was Coke's answer. A few minutes after, Lord Grey took Coke by the arm and, leading him up to the portrait, asked him if he didn't consider it an excellent likeness. "I do," said Coke. "It ought to be at Holkham," suggested Lord Grey. Coke kept his own counsel, and did not let out that he had bought it. "I can only say," added Lord Grey, "that if the portrait does not go to Holkham, it *shall* go to Howick!" "And I say it shall not," said Coke, "because it belongs to me!"

In the course of the year, therefore, the picture arrived at Holkham, and although destined at first to hang in the library, it was afterwards put in the chapel,

[1] Sir Martin Archer Shee (1769–1830), portrait painter. Became R.A. in 1820 and P.R.A. in 1830, when he was knighted.

where some lines specially written by Roscoe were placed under it.

The Bishop continued to visit at Holkham till within a short time of his death, at the age of ninety-three. When staying there in his eightieth year, he surreptitiously assumed for the last time the character of a sportsman. Thinking that it might not be decorous for a bishop to join the shooting party, he went out with his son, General Bathurst,[1] for a walk. The Bishop took his stick and the General his gun; but no sooner were they a short distance from the house than the Bishop took the gun and the General the stick, and meeting with a cock-pheasant the Bishop immediately shot it. He was so pleased with this exploit that he brought it home in triumph, and begged Coke to let him have it to keep. This request was at once granted, and thereupon the Bishop had the bird stuffed, and kept it as a trophy of the last shot he ever fired. It weighed 4 lb. 2 oz.—At eighty-four he wrote to Coke: "Poaching is still as much my ruling passion as it is our friend Roger's!"[2]

One of the first ceremonies which the Bishop was called upon to perform after his own installation at Norwich, was the marriage of Lady Andover and Admiral Digby. From that date forward he considered himself entitled to officiate at every ceremony connected with his friend's family, a privilege which he declared he would resign to no man while the power of speech remained to him. On one occasion only, as we shall see, was this determination overruled.

[1] General Bathurst was taken off the field of Waterloo owing to his being deranged.

[2] Roger Wilbraham.

CHAPTER XXIII

MISCELLANEOUS EVENTS

1807–16

Ætat 53–62

THE question which formed the basis of the friendship between Coke and Bishop Bathurst was never brought into greater prominence than at the close of that brief Parliament which sat during 1806–7. Short as were its days, it accomplished a measure for which it deserves to be remembered for all time. On March 23rd, while Coke was Member for Derby, the Bill for the Abolition of Slavery was passed; but on the 31st of the same month, after barely a year in office, the "Ministry of all the Talents" resigned on that other great question of liberty of thought—the Bill for Catholic Emancipation. By a law passed in the Parliament of Ireland, 1793, Catholics were allowed to hold commissions in the army in Ireland, and to attain to any rank save that of Commander-in-Chief of the Forces, Master-General of the Ordnance, or General of the Staff. The measures proposed by Lord Grenville's Ministry in 1807 designed to extend to the Catholics of England the privileges already conceded to their Irish brethren, and to remove the restrictions imposed by the Act of 1793. But this bill was overthrown by the

personal wish and unconstitutional interference of George III, so that once again the Whigs, retiring from office, had cause to denounce the policy of a King who was opposed to all Liberal reforms.

Thus the question of the Catholic claims which, ever since 1778, had been the cause of riots and agitation, was not yet destined to be laid to rest. Even its opponents admitted that the adoption of certain concessions proposed by Pitt in 1801 would have smoothed many difficulties from the paths of both ministers and people. But the prejudices of the King and the intolerance of the Tories still co-operated to retard an act of justice which, in the natural progress of civilisation, was inevitable. Much must be conceded to the fact that Roman Catholicism represented a political as well as a religious danger in the land. Even to those in favour of religious equality it offered a very open question whether, in upholding tolerance, they were not furthering a religion of intolerance, and entailing a revival of mediæval Papistry in all its horrors; while by admitting Catholics to an equality with Protestants in matters of State, they were risking the introduction of a source of serious political intrigue. On the other hand, the absurd restrictions and actual persecution to which the Catholics had been subjected were an offence against humanity and common sense; and in the present day are difficult to realise. Not only were Roman Catholics forbidden to hold any office under Government, but, before 1791, they could be legally prosecuted for the mere fact of being Papists, for not attending the parish (Anglican) churches, for hearing or saying Mass, for performing or taking part in any act of worship

according to the Roman Catholic religion, and, above all, for holding any ecclesiastical office under the Church of Rome. The existence of such laws, even if not actively enforced, gave a legal basis to persecution, and, as instanced by the disgraceful Gordon Riots, inflamed the imagination of the masses, until the cry of "No Popery" and "Church and King" became the watchword of a party, and served as bugbears by which the bigoted scared the ignorant.

Coke, always opposed to all coercion or intolerance, summed up his views on this question in the simple statement: "I wish every man to go to Heaven his own way. If he is a good man the path which he takes will lead him to the Heavenly Mansions."[1] The very epitome of Christianity to him lay in its doctrine of "Peace and goodwill to all mankind"; and to the last years of his life, as we shall see, his views never underwent any change with regard to those who refused to accept this, the fundamental law of Christ's teaching. In consequence of such opinions Coke was regarded with antagonism by the extremists of the opposite party, and on one occasion when he stood for re-election, Oldershaw, an Archdeacon of the cathedral, canvassed for his opponent in a novel manner by running about the streets of Norwich with hands upraised, crying, "The Church is in danger! The Church is in danger!"

The same exercise of the royal prerogative which had prevented the settlement of the Catholic claims in 1807, next introduced into the Cabinet men who were opposed to all Liberal measures. The Duke of Port-

[1] Speech at Thetford, July, 1830.

land became Prime Minister, Canning Foreign Secretary and Castlereagh[1] Secretary for War. With George Ponsonby[2] as Leader of the Opposition, this Ministry held office till 1809, when the duel between Canning and Castlereagh led to the reconstruction of the Cabinet, with Perceval[3] at its head.

Castlereagh, it may be mentioned, being reputed to traffic in places and pensions, was early an object of Coke's dislike, and had occasion to be aware of the fact. At a time of great national distress and heavy taxation, Castlereagh, speaking of the sufferings of the overburdened masses, deprecated their "*Ignorant impatience of taxation.*" This speech Coke never forgave, and when any discussion on taxation arose in the House he quoted it in a manner to throw ridicule on Castlereagh, till his constant bitter reference to it gave to it the notoriety it obtained.

Meanwhile, upon the Continent, Napoleon was approaching the zenith of his power. Europe was plunged into war, and every department of industry was affected. Particularly was this the case with all agricultural products in England: the price of corn rose, and in 1809 the wool market was seriously dimin-

[1] Robert Steward, Viscount Castlereagh 1769–1822.

[2] George Ponsonby (1755–1817), Lord Chancellor of Ireland, third son of John Ponsonby, brother of William Brabazon Ponsonby, first Baron Ponsonby. Entered Parliament 1776 as Member for the borough of Wicklow; and took a very determined tone on the Regency question in 1789, arguing strongly in favour of the address to the Prince of Wales.

[3] Spencer Perceval, second son of the second Earl of Egremont (1762–1812). Solicitor-General in 1801, Attorney-General in 1802, Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1807, and Prime Minister in 1809. He was assassinated in the House of Commons by John Bellingham.

ished. Jehoshaphat Posstle, a friend of Dr. Parr's, writing to the latter from Thetford that year, remarks:—

> "I am come here to attend our Annual Wool Fair. It is a *child* of our good friend Coke. He will be in the chair, and, I doubt not, give us a good discourse after dinner, exhorting the buyers to offer good prices and the growers to take them. It is always attended by the leading agricultural men of Norfolk and Suffolk as well as the farmers in general. It is likely to be very full to-day, and we shall probably hear 'a great cry and little wool!'"

"I well remember your predictions at the conclusion of the Peace of Amiens," wrote Rufus King to Coke at this date; "they have since been in a literal course of fulfilment." Unfortunately, England, assisting Austria, next dispatched the ill-fated Walcheren expedition, which rendered her position yet more critical. The following year, 1810, the debate relating to the failure of this expedition came on in the House. The order against the admission of strangers into the gallery was enforced during the discussion, and a man named Jones,[1] in a debating society, condemned the exclusion of the public from the debates in the House. The Commons foolishly sent him to Newgate. Sir Francis Burdett denied the right of the Commons to imprison Jones, and they committed the greater folly of serving a warrant upon Burdett to send him to the Tower. Burdett, who considered the whole proceedings irregular, determined to protest against and to resist

[1] John Gale Jones, by trade an apothecary, the president of a debating society known as the "British Forum."

the warrant. He retired to his house, which he caused to be securely barricaded, and there, in the midst of his entrenchment, Coke and Whitbread called upon him on the Sunday before the warrant was expected to be served. Both reasoned with him strongly against the course he had determined to pursue; Coke argued that it would excite the populace needlessly and lead to disastrous riots, probably bloodshed; and that, although the principle which Burdett upheld was correct, his action with regard to it was a mistake of judgment. Burdett's only reply was that his mind was irrevocably made up.

Accordingly, when the writ was served upon him, on April 6th, although he did not resist it with personal violence, he refused to obey it unless compelled to do so by force; and as Coke had anticipated, this news spread like wildfire through London; crowds assembled with the cry of "Burdett for ever!", damage to property ensued, the military were called out, the Riot Act read, and many lives lost. In spite of the rejection of his advice, Coke did not fail to visit Burdett in prison, and his example was followed by the Duke of Sussex, who usually took his own line, independent of Sovereign or Parliament. Burdett remarked afterwards at the Holkham Sheep-shearing how the Duke "did not think it degrading to countenance one whom he knew to be an unjustly suffering subject," and how neither the Duke nor Coke considered "the walls in which he was confined to be a disgrace."

On May 31st Mr. Brand again introduced into the Commons a Bill for Parliamentary Reform, which was defeated by two hundred and thirty-four to one hundred

and fifteen, and Colonel Wardle[1] indignantly remarked that "it would be just as satisfactory to take the first six hundred and fifty-eight men who went over Westminster Bridge for Members of Parliament as the present House of Commons!" A few days later a dinner was given at the Crown and Anchor Tavern to celebrate the anniversary of Burdett's election for Westminster, and the health of "Coke and the Norfolk Freeholders" was given. In returning thanks Coke said:—

> "He would not now make any profession of his principles, but merely refer them to the vote which he had given the other night (on the Motion for Parliamentary Reform), and also to the entire course of a long political life. He had entered Parliament in 1776; they well knew what dangerous times had since elapsed, and he hoped they also knew that he had never shrunk from his share of that danger. He had, in the first instance, voted against the war with America, and down to this day had opposed the system which was bringing the country into such a ruinous condition. He had, at all events, voted sincerely, and hoped they would give him credit for that sincerity. After all that had been said on the subject, he still confessed himself a Party man. From Party this country had derived the glorious Revolution; and from Party, founded on pure principles, he had no doubt it would receive important future advantages. He did not agree with the sentiments of Colonel Wardle. He would go no such length! but he did wish to have a fair representation of the people and also to make taxation go hand in hand with representation. This was the

[1] Colonel Wardle conducted the censure and inquiry of the Duke of York. He was of "mean capacity and meaner disposition, was remarkable for nothing but the atrocities he had perpetrated and encouraged against the Irish insurgents in 1797." See *Further Memoirs of the Whig Party*, by Richard Vassell, Lord Holland, p. 27.

true principle on which he had opposed the American War, and this was now the principle on which he supported Reform."[1]

Sir Francis warmly applauded this speech. He was, at this time, looked upon as the staunch Man of the People; while his genuine kindness of heart endeared him to his friends. Coke described him at one of the Sheep-shearings as "one of his earliest friends, than whom he esteemed none more as a patriot or as a man; the country had not a better friend to the Constitution, nor the Crown a more faithful subject."[2]

Yet it would appear that the more intimate friendship which existed between himself and Burdett, must have dated from the receipt of the following letter:—

Sir Francis Burdett to T. W. Coke.

"Oxford, *October 24th*, 1812.

"Dear Mr. Coke,

"I cannot refrain (I hope you will excuse me and not think it presumption) from writing you a line to say how much pleasure I received from reading your address, or speech, to the Freeholders of Norfolk. Could our Country Gentlemen be brought to think and act in like manner, there would soon be an end of the upstart system. I beg leave to be a soldier in your camp, and I look to no other standard but yours, of which I dare promise that I shall, under all circumstances, be a faithful and zealous follower.

"Will you enroll me? You know I am not given to desertion. I wish a party could be formed on your basis. I think it must be so in unison with every thinking and honest mind, that it would not fail,

[1] *Norwich Journal*, June 2nd, 1810.

[2] Speech at the Sheep-shearing in 1821.

with a moderate share of industry, to be specially powerful, and perhaps to save our ill-treated country. There certainly is a spirit rising which only wants cherishing and methodising to be more than a match for corruption, widely as it is extended; but it will stand in need of direction, and who so fit to direct it, or so likely to direct beneficially, as country gentlemen of unsophisticated understandings, disinterested views and independent fortunes. In truth, they are the persons principally concerned, infinitely more than the common people; it is their estates that other men (under the present system) make ducks and drakes of; and it is high time they should look about them. When they see a Purser of a Man of War, in a few years, amass an enormous fortune, obtain a great Parliamentary interest and build a palace fit to receive the King in, whilst they are obliged to pay court to this *Fungus* and ask favours for their children, where do they imagine all this comes from, if not out of their own estates?

"In the reign of Edward III it was a court expedient for raising money to call upon the landed proprietors by *quo warranto* to show their title to their estate, under the legal fiction of their being held originally from the Crown; sooner than do which, many compounded for money. Amongst others, old Earl Warren was summoned; he appeared as his own lawyer in the King's Bench, and being called on by the Chief Justice to show his title deeds, the old gentleman rose, and pulling out a rusty sword from the scabbard, 'By this,' says he, 'my forefathers won it, and by this, with the blessing of God, I'll keep it!' The greatest part of the other landowners joined in this issue with Warren, and the King prudently drew in his horns and troubled men no more about the titles to their estates. I think a sketch of this story and a picture representing the transaction, with the great Charter, should be hung up in every gentleman's hall in England.

"But by this time I think I am sufficiently tire-

some, and so will conclude, which I do with great esteem and most sincerely.

"Yours,

"F. BURDETT.

"Sir J. Throckmorton is just come in; he begs to be remembered to you and flatters me by saying he entirely concurs in opinion with me upon this subject."

Burdett, subsequently, was present at most of the Holkham Sheep-shearings, and on the next occasion when he was imprisoned (for having incited a mob and for having written a pamphlet on the trial of Queen Caroline), all the leading Whigs of the day assembled at Holkham to greet him on his liberation; the same party afterwards adjourning to Quidenham.

Burdett once told Coke that his own propensity for plain-speaking and paying the penalty was a matter of inheritance. An ancestor of his had been executed for the same fault. Edward IV, while hunting in the park of the latter, had done to death a favourite white buck. The Burdett of that day expressed the rash wish that the horns of the buck had first entered the body of its murderer; and for this opinion he was executed for high treason.

A few days after the dinner at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, Coke experienced the loss of another of his political and personal friends. For some time past the health of Windham had given cause for anxiety. In July of the previous year, whilst walking home from a party at Miss Berry's at midnight, Windham saw a house on fire. The night was wild and wet, with a high wind which swept the flames before it, and he

realised at a glance that a neighbouring house which belonged to a friend of his, Mr. Frederick North, was in imminent danger. Knowing that Mr. North had a very valuable library, Windham, with his usual courage, determined to save as much of this as was possible, and having got assistance, he set to work. For four hours he laboured, long after the house was blazing over his head, and refused to leave until he had saved three-fourths of the books, and until it was impossible to remain another moment. As he made good his escape, some falling woodwork hit him upon the hip, but he did not feel any bad effects from the blow at the time, and suffered more from a violent chill contracted by the exposure to alternate heat and cold during so many hours. In the following August he went to stay at Holkham, and went for long rides over the farms with Coke; when curiously enough, it was the health of the latter, usually so robust, which occupied his attention, for he says how he found Coke suffering from "a sort of low fever which was hanging about him," and how he urged Coke on no account to neglect this. On the day of his departure, Windham therefore rose at six, and set off before his chaise came round, in order that he might call privately at the doctor's *en route* and ask him to second this advice.

Soon afterwards, he became aware that a tumour was forming on the place where he had been burnt, and before long an operation became necessary. He consulted ten doctors before yielding himself to the surgeon's knife. In those days, when anæsthetics were unknown, the torture of surgical treatment was intense; Windham bore it heroically; but, later, fever ensued,

and he lost strength rapidly. On June 1st, lying in his house in Pall Mall, he inquired the date, and on being told, he replied, "Then I shall die on the 4th, the King's birthday." His prediction was verified; on that day he expired at the age of sixty. Subsequently the body was taken down to Norfolk for burial. It lay all night in the "Maid's Head" at Norwich, in the very room where, thirty-two years before, he had made his maiden speech on the American war; and there, at seven o'clock on the following morning, Coke joined the small band of intimate friends who alone, in accordance with Windham's express wish, were to escort it back to Felbrigg. In the early morning, as the procession wound slowly out of the town, it passed over the very spot where Coke and the dead man had been chaired jointly as Knights of the Shire, four years previously, at the stormy election of 1806.

In the November following Windham's death, a serious recurrence of the King's illness showed that he had become hopelessly insane. The Prince of Wales again became Regent; but, as on the previous occasions, subject to certain restrictions, to which he was now by no means disposed to submit. The Whigs, who looked upon him as the champion of their party, and who pinned their faith on his support, had no wish to curtail his authority. "I had made up my mind," wrote Lord Albemarle to Coke, on January 19th, 1811, "upon no account to apply to you again to quit your fireside, but I am so strongly desired by the Prince to express his anxious wish that you would support him in the last great struggle on Monday night 21st, that I

cannot refuse. I can only add to this, that the Prince's conduct throughout this Regency business has been such as to deserve *your* support."

The first blow to their hopes occurred on February 9th, when, in spite of their opposition, the bill restricting the Prince's authority was passed, and the Prince took the oaths in accordance with it before the Privy Council. The second, when it appeared that a personal quarrel had arisen between the Prince and his Whig friends; that he had called in Sheridan's aid in criticising a reply which Grey and Grenville had prepared in answer to addresses from the two Houses—returning the same with pungent and witty marginal remarks which were obviously not his own composition; and further, that he had no intention of dismissing the present Tory Ministry, alleging, as his excuse, that his father's illness was probably only temporary, and that to go against His Majesty's wishes might have a very serious result on the health of the latter.

Roger Wilbraham to Thomas William Coke.

"My dear Coke, "*February 4th*, 1811.

"Let me first begin by contradicting the report I heard, namely that Sheridan had played false. I understand quite the contrary.

"Yesterday Lords Grey and Grenville attended the Prince by appointment and were with him nearly two hours. I cannot tell you what passed; but it is understood that H.R.H. at present continues the same administration he has found. This is not for want of good and bold Counsellors. Lord Moira told him he would lose Ireland. Sheridan told him he would lose his crown, and all told him that his character would be wholly gone. No one could ever

rely upon him in the course of his life. Young Lord Devonshire spoke to him very strongly; Lord Thanet, who demanded an audience, perhaps more so. Lord T. told me himself what he said to the Prince; representing to him that the determination he had made to continue the same Ministers was the greatest calamity that had happened to this country since the death of Mr. Fox. The Prince spoke of his strong attachment to that great man, he begged Lord T. would suspend his judgment for a few weeks, and he should then see sufficient to content him. He stated to Lord T. the grounds of his Determination. That it was represented to him by his mother and the Physicians that his Majesty was in a progressive state of recovery; that, upon his approach to convalescence, should he find a change of the Administration, it might give him another paroxysm, it might be fatal to him, or, at least, it might greatly retard his cure; that H.R.H. would be the occasion of all this. This consideration (backed perhaps by the arguments of the Duke of Cumberland) had induced him, out of Duty and Loyalty to his father, to resolve upon this measure; that he felt most acutely the measure he was obliged to take; but he could not do otherwise.

"Lord T. left him, pitying him but not blaming him, unless for want of firmness, for he totally acquits him of any deceit whatever, yielding to the pressing messages from Windsor and not to any compact or bargain with the present Ministers, none of whom, it was confidently said yesterday, that he had yet seen.

"He certainly held out to Lord T., but without, as far as I could learn, expressing it in direct terms, that if the malady of H.M. should continue, that he would then change the present Administration; but who knows? How may he be cajoled and conciliated by the present people? When in the first instance his own popularity (which by the way is his great object and which he does not understand, for it is never to be gained by wavering counsels),

the security of Ireland, the concision of abuses and peculations and the punishment of the peculators; and the great, great object of all—Peace—might have been the happy result of firmness; all these great hopes are sacrificed to what appears to be a misplaced tenderness and duty; and he has stamped his own character with an indelible mark of unsteadiness. How much better would he have done? and perhaps even might still?—at least in my opinion, were he to send a message to both houses of Parliament, begging them to suspend for a short time, during the period of H.M.'s supposed state of convalescence, the whole of their proceedings on the Regency Bill, with the hopes of there being no occasion for such a measure? That H.M.'s recovery might render it unnecessary, trusting to them to adopt the same modes of carrying on the Government that they had resorted to for the last fortnight. But no—then he would not be invested with power—he would not be a Regent.

"Excuse my prolixity, though if I hear anything more in the course of the morning, you may have it in a P.S., and believe me as usual,

"Ever yours,

"Roger Wilbraham.

"Lord Spencer at 3 o'clock told me there is no news, and Boodles furnishes none at 4 o'clock; but it may not be unacceptable to you to hear that Capt. Digby and Lady Andover and family arrived safe yesterday, and are perfectly well."

Roger Wilbraham's view of the vacillating character of the Prince proved to be correct; although, at first, privately assuring the Whigs that he entertained an unalterable dislike to his Tory Ministers, and stating that he was acting under the necessity which circumstances enforced, the Prince was soon won over to the Tory side, till he even began to speak of his old friends and the party he had so long affected as "the wicked

politicians." The Whig lords were indignant at his apostasy from their cause, and, henceforward, little love was lost between them and the Prince. Quidenham and Holkham simultaneously closed their doors to him, and though history does not relate whether the Prince ever attempted to renew his friendship with Coke, from this second severance between them there was no appeal,—never again was he admitted within the house of his former "brother Whig."

On one subsequent occasion only is a meeting between Coke and the Prince recorded, which, although it belongs to a later date, may be mentioned here. In 1817, when an attack had been made upon the Prince Regent's life, the Whigs of Norfolk seized upon the opportunity to propose an address to him that bore considerable resemblance to a pill silvered. While congratulating the Prince on his escape "from the atrocious attack upon his person," they prayed him, in very plain terms, immediately "to dismiss from his presence and Council those advisers who by their conduct had proved themselves alike enemies to the Throne and the people." This forcible address Coke was called upon to present at the levée on April 21st that year. The Regent was warned of the prospect. Knowing that Coke valued his position as a Commoner above everything, he declared with an oath—"If Coke of Norfolk enters my presence, by God, I'll knight him!" The speech was repeated to Coke. "If he dares," was the rejoinder, "by God, I'll break his sword!"[1]

[1] The address presented by Coke on this occasion was the subject of much excited comment, both in speeches and pamphlets. In "*A letter to T. W. Coke, Esqre., M.P.,*" *by a Clergyman*, printed and sold by Burks and Kinnerbrook, Norwich, 1817, p. 8, Coke is addressed as follows: "I

Moreover, it is said that the annoyance occasioned to his quondam friend by Coke's presence at Court was invariably increased by the fact that Coke adhered to his privilege as a County Member of attending the levée in top boots and breeches. "This privilege," we are told, "Mr. Coke declined to forego, much to the disgust of that fine gentleman, the Regent,"[1] who had yet to learn, like his father before him, that Courtly etiquette, when not accompanied by personal respect, was a matter which carried no weight with his first Commoner.

For a time, however, many of the Whigs contented themselves with treating the Prince with silent neglect.

> "As to the Whigs, dear Sir," wrote Dr. Parr indignantly to Coke, "I think that a sentence of exclusion and proscription has been passed on them by the P.R. In his heart he will never forgive them, and if his head should ever lead him to call them to his counsels, distrust and hatred, the consciousness of his own treachery, and the latent conviction of their talents and their virtues, will fix a deep and impassable gulf between his compulsory choice of them as a sovereign and his confidence in them as an employer. They may check him while he is their

believe with Colonel Wodehouse that 'it will be difficult to quote an instance of a congratulatory address to the Throne on such an event, being coupled with a direct attack on the King's Ministers.' It is not only a novel, but a monstrous proceeding. It reminds us of the powerful argument used by the Barbarian, for the conversion of a neighbouring Potentate. 'With this knife Abdulkader will condescend to shave the head of Damel, if Damel will embrace the Mahomedan faith; and with this other knife Abdulkader will cut the throat of Damel, if Damel refuses to embrace it.' The illustrious personage to whom this Janus-headed address, manufactured under your auspices, was presented the other day, looked, we have been given to understand, rather askaunce upon it. And in good truth, *well he might.*"

[1] *Memoir of the Family of Taylor of Norwich*, by Philip Taylor, privately printed, 1886.

enemy, but they will be disgraced and betrayed by him when he becomes their convert. In this deplorable state of things, I think it more than ever the duty of the Whigs to be at their posts in parliamentary warfare; to stand aloof from Levées at Carlton House; to trample under foot all overtures, whatsoever, for negotiations about place and power; to let loose their indignation upon a libertine, a betrayer and a foe—even to the decorum, as well as the principles of an English Government. But I grow tiresome, as I grow angry, and yet I am very happy in recollecting that I am the only clergyman in England, of anything resembling professional rank, who has not made a bow at Carlton House."

Mr. Perceval's Premiership was unexpectedly short-lived, for, on May 11th, 1812, he was assassinated by a lunatic as he was entering the House. Complications ensued. Lord Wellesley and Canning would not serve with Castlereagh; Grenville and Grey, on attempting a Ministry of their own, quarrelled with Lord Moira on the appointments of the Household. Finally the Regent, rather than remain longer without a Ministry, entrusted Lord Liverpool[1] with the Premiership, June, 1812, and the old Ministry remained in office.

Throughout the winter of 1811 great misery had been prevalent among the lower classes in England. Napoleon's decrees against English commerce had been met on the part of the English Government by the Orders in Council, a means of retaliation which fell heavily upon the manufacturing districts, and which alienated the United States, who declared war June 18th, 1812. The Orders in Council were repealed

[1] Robert Banks Jenkinson, Earl of Liverpool (1770–1828). Entered Parliament in 1791. In Perceval's Ministry he was Secretary for War and the Colonies.

soon after the death of Mr. Perceval, but too late to prevent the conflict with America. Coke's verdict upon the attitude of the Government appears to have been concise:

> "My dear Coke," wrote Roger Wilbraham on the following June 25th, "you, in your place, called the House of Commons a *Sink of Corruption*. Now, I should be glad to know, if anyone should do that at the present time, and out of the House, whether the Attorney-General would dare to prosecute, and, if he did, whether he would be able to find a Jury to convict."

But after dwelling at length upon the conduct of the Government, Mr. Wilbraham turned to a pleasanter topic:

> "I saw your fair daughters last night, both looking as well as you could wish them. Upon the fair Eliza I hear eulogiums pronounced wherever I go; and her civility and kindness to me have made a very deep impression upon my mind; perhaps, too, I may look upon it in the light of a kind of collateral proof of your friendship, and so value it higher on that account.
>
> "Pray do you still continue in the intention of selling your Oxfordshire Estate?
>
> "I hear that your Clippings are more numerously attended this year than ever."

At the "Clippings" to which Roger Wilbraham refers, it was remarked how "Mr. Coke had lately introduced the northern practice of drilling Swedish turnips." Coke's neighbours, the Townshends, had originally introduced the turnip industry into Norfolk in the reign of George I, but they sowed their fields in the old broadcast manner, and it was Coke who, by means of the drill, produced weightier crops, so that the size of the Norfolk turnips became proverbial. A

somewhat fantastic tribute to his success in this respect, had appeared in 1811 in *The Agricultural Magazine*,[1] and which states that—

> Some countyes vaunte themselves in pyes,
> And some in meate excell;
> For turnippes of enormous size
> Faire Norfolke beares the belle.

After which it proceeds to relate what purports to be an old tale, how "a hardie knighte" who was "pricking o'er the ley" on a dark night, lost his way, and was like to have been frozen to death with cold, when at last—

> Now voices strange assaile his eare,
> And yet nee house is nie;
> Thought he—the devil himself is here,
> Preserve me, God on hie!
>
> When from a hollow turnippe neare
> Out jumped a living weighte;
> With friendly voice, and accent cleare,
> He thus addressed the knighte.
>
> Sir knighte, ne demon dwelleth heer,
> Ne gyaunte keeps his house,
> But tway poor drovers, goodman Vere,
> And honest Robin Rouse.
>
> *We twayne have taken shelter here,*
> *With oxen ninety-two;*
> And if you'll enter never feare,
> *There's room enough for you!*

Even making due allowance for the fertile imagination which could picture two drovers, fourscore and twelve oxen, and a "hardie knighte" finding shelter in a roomy "turnippe," one is left under a distinct impression that Norfolk turnips at this date were abnormally fine!

[1] *The Norfolke Turnippe. An ancient Tale, addressed to Mr. Coke, of Norfolk.* Quoted in *The Agricultural Magazine*, Sept., 1811.

At these same "Clippings," in 1812, Dr. Parr was present, and relates how, previous to the public gathering, he watched Coke personally working amongst his shepherds, and inspiring the men with his own remarkable energy. This confirms the account given some years before by Arthur Young, who stated how "Mr. Coke readily assists, not only his own tenants, but other neighbouring farmers. . . . He puts on his shepherd's smock and superintends the pens, to the sure improvement of the flock, for his judgment is superior and admitted. I have seen him and the late Duke of Bedford, thus accoutred, work all day, and not quit the business till the darkness forced them home to dinner."[1]

From Holkham, Dr. Parr went for a long ramble through various counties, of which excursion he wrote an amusing account for the benefit of Miss Coke.[2] The following November, a present of Holkham game again brought from him a characteristic acknowledgment, a very curtailed extract from which may serve to show the usual length and style of the Doctor's communications to Coke.

Extract from a letter from Dr. Samuel Parr to Thomas William Coke.

"HATTON, *Nov. 16th*, 1812.

"My long-tried Friend and honoured Patron, Mr. Coke,

"I have delayed making my most thankful acknowledgments to you for a noble present of game, in order that I might have an opportunity of telling you the goodly uses to which I intended to apply it.

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 144.

[2] *Parr's Works*, ed. by J. Johnstone, Vol. VII, p. 259, where the date is wrongly given as 1817.

I was going to Birmingham last week, and there I had the satisfaction to dispose of it in the following manner. I gave one of the hares to a person who is deeply versed in mechanics and mathematics, and of whom Mr. Wm. Coke used to say that 'Somehow or other, he looked like a sort of philosopher'; he certainly deserves the name, he has often talked of you with the greatest possible respect, and though he knows little and cares little about politics, he lately reserved a vote for my disposal, if we could have found a Whig-candidate for Warwickshire; and this I thought a praiseworthy measure. . . .

"But the other hare and the two pheasants were reserved for a more glorious use. In defiance of my brainless cook and loquacious housemaid, I maintained that they would keep for a week, and so they were destined as exquisite luxuries to regale the following personages:

"Mrs. Corry, handsome, sensible and a Whig; Mrs. Smith, rather less handsome but accomplished and a Whig; Mrs. J. Johnstone,[1] equally beautiful, quite as accomplished, quite as amiable, and the Whig-daughter of a Tory-Captain; Miss Bailey, more beautiful, more accomplished and a resolute Whig; Miss Mary Johnstone, less young, less handsome, equally, if not more sensible, and a most resolute Whig indeed; Miss Corry, not very blooming from youth nor very graceful in manners, but poignant in her wit and almost republican in her politics. So much I have to say for the heroines who feasted upon the Holkham game, and who filled their glasses to the honour of the Holkham patriot after the example of their male companions, whom I shall now proceed to describe:

"Samuel Parr, Deputy-Curate of Hatton—*not a Tory;* Dr. J. Johnstone of Birmingham, an eminent physician, an excellent scholar, a Chymist, an idolater of Mr. Fox and an admirer of Sir Samuel Romilly, Mr. Coke and Mr. Whitbread, and other long-tried

[1] Wife of Parr's biographer, Dr. Johnstone.

Worthies. (N.B.—He feels the pulse and is captivated with the charms of Lady Hertford,[1] but he despises most heartily and he detests most fiercely, and he abuses most bitterly the P.R.)

"But to go on with our list: Mr. Smith, an independent Gloucestershire gentleman, who, though educated at my Tory college of Emanuel, is a sturdy Whig, supported Sir Wm. Guise, execrates the Ministry, and does all credit to the cause of Whiggism by a well-cultivated understanding; Tertius Galton, who is a semi-demi-quaker in religion, a semi-beau in dress, a lover of wonders and of rarities in science, and by profession, a Whig; J. Dawes, a Surgeon, a Mathematician, too busy to read Parliamentary speeches, and too sensible to be a Ministerialist; Edmund Henry Baker, a member of Trin. Col., Cam., and a most admirable scholar, a truly honourable man, the apostate of a Tory-Parsonic Wilberforcian, a sincere admirer of Mr. Coke, and my very esteemed friend. Next to him comes Lawyer Corry, who I verily believe would not sell his vote for twice 6/8, is a shrewd fellow, does not much like churchmen, but expiates this ungodliness by a rooted antipathy to bad Ministers and bad Princes. My catalogue will close with the name of our host, J. Corry, a Presbyterian Minister, but a man of better taste and better manners than I ever saw in any pastor of Conventicles, a fine writer of English, a reader, not only in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, but in French and Italian, and German; a very enlightened theologian, a profound Chymist, a most elegant Lecturer upon the whole circle of natural philosophy, and an enthusiastic champion of Mr. Fox, a powerful advocate in the cause of Whiggism and an active, zealous, intrepid adherent to Whig-Members of Parliament, to Whig-candidates for Parliament, and to Whig principles on all subjects and in all companies.

[1] Isabella, wife of second Marquis of Hertford, Lord Chamberlain; celebrated for her liaison with George IV, till superseded in his favour by Elizabeth, Marchioness of Conyngham.

"And now, dear sir, you will give me credit for a sound judgment in assembling the foregoing assemblage of males and females to partake of the present which I had the honour of receiving, and to express their warm and unfeigned good wishes to the eminently respectable and much-respected donor. . . .

"Pray desire Miss Coke to read the *Calamities of Authors*, lately published by D'Israeli, and I could further wish her to read the 2nd Vol. of Dr. Clarke's "Travels in the Holy Land"; in all probability she has read the 1st Vol. which chiefly turns upon other countries, but pray tell her that I have nowhere seen so credible or so interesting an account of Jerusalem in its present state as I met in Dr. Clarke's 2nd Vol. and as Miss Coke is not a slovenly or a superficial reader, I am sure that she will attend carefully to some geographical discussions in the preface. . . . I beg of you to present my very sincere best compts. to Lady Andover; but to Miss Coke I must desire to be remembered in the more serious language of blessing. . . ."

The years from 1810 to 1811 proved the last years of Napoleon's ascendancy in Europe. In 1812 he became involved in a third struggle with Russia which proved disastrous. In the following spring, George Ponsonby, leader of the Opposition, begged Coke most earnestly to aid in averting the impending war with France and to throw his influence into the scale against the Ministers—"who," he wrote, "are of opinion that this country should go to war because Bonaparte is on the throne of France, without any act of aggression committed on his part, and without any previous intercourse or negociation with him."

The question was one which roused great diversity of opinion. In 1800 Bonaparte had made overtures for peace with England, and had written a letter to

George III, proposing that hostilities should be terminated between the two countries. Lord Grenville, Secretary for Foreign Affairs, writing to his brother immediately after the receipt of the letter, said: "I need not tell you we shall say '*No.*'" The friendly advances of Bonaparte were rejected by England, who made peace conditional upon the restoration of the ancient line of Princes "*under whom France had enjoyed so many centuries of prosperity*," a condition and an assertion at which Napoleon must have laughed. Again at this crisis Coke deprecated interference with a foreign power, and maintained that England's policy should be defensive, not offensive. The people of France had a right to choose whatever form of government they preferred; Bonaparte was the ruler of their choice—perhaps because "the French, and all other turbulent people, are to be governed by the reason of force, rather than the force of reason"; and for us to attempt to dictate to them in the matter was as ludicrous as it was aggressive.

But the efforts of the Opposition were of no avail, and on June 21st, 1813, the Duke of Wellington invaded France. "From the commencement of this long-protracted war," wrote Coke early in the following year, "I have always thought it might have been avoided, and I still think that peace might be obtained if the Allies were sincere in wishing it." In consequence, Coke and many of his friends were again accused of siding with Napoleon against their own countrymen, and posterity has thrown this accusation against Dr. Parr.[1] Yet his own remarks to Coke

[1] De Quincey, in his famous essay on Dr. Parr, makes such an assertion, and by quoting a portion only of the letter which Parr wrote to

sufficiently explain his views: "I do not wish for the murder even of such an *ambitious, crafty and vindictive Potentate* as Napoleon," writes this supposed Bonapartist, "but I do wish for the entire and permanent independence of every European State. . . . If the French people wish to change their Sovereign, let their own deeds be the instrument of their own choice!"

Changes in the government of France now followed in rapid succession. On April 6th, 1814, Napoleon was forced to abdicate; and on May 3rd, Louis XVIII entered Paris. On March 1st, 1815, Napoleon again landed in France, and the reign of a hundred days began. But the battle of Waterloo on June 18th resulted in his final overthrow; four days later he abdicated; and the following month surrendered himself to the English.

Only one reference to the battle of Waterloo occurs in the correspondence preserved at Holkham. It is, as usual, from the pen of Dr. Parr, who wrote at a time when the Duke of Wellington had roused the enmity of the Whigs by his opposition to Reform. "I abhor, and in some respects I despise the Duke of Wellington," pronounced Dr. Parr. "There goes a story that he was tripping away at a dance at Brussels the night before the battle of Waterloo. Now, my dear Sir, if you and I were chatting with a crew of Episcopal Royalists, I should make you shake your sides with laughter, and I should surprise and provoke their

Coke and suppressing the context, makes it appear to bear out his statement. Compare *De Quincey's Works* (Masson), Vol. V, p. 125, and *Dr. Parr's Works* (Johnstone), Vol. VII, pp. 254–5, where the letter is given in full. It must, however, be borne in mind that De Quincey was a Tory, and that his criticism of Dr. Parr is obviously not unbiassed.

Lordships with the tale of a parallel case in antiquity!" —Presumably, Nero fiddling while Rome was burning.

The result of a war, which for eleven years had been wasting Europe, was universal distress at home and abroad. In January, 1814, John Wodehouse[1] wrote to ask Coke if he would start a public fund for the unfortunate inhabitants of Germany; but Coke, while sending £50 privately to the fund, refused to put his name to a public requisition for a county meeting to promote it. "I must decline," he explained, "putting my name to a requisition to relieve the distresses of strange countries, while our own is so severely suffering from taxation and the consequences of this war."

The distress prevalent throughout the country was, in short, unprecedented. The labourers lived principally on barley cakes and potatoes. Their wages were very low, 1s. 6d. per day in the summer and 1s. 2d. in the winter. They scarcely ever tasted meat, and their clay-built and straw-thatched cottages were neither wind nor water-tight. Coke never ceased to point out how the heavy taxation consequent on the long period of war, the salaries still granted to Ministerial favourites, and, above all, the lack of proper representation in Parliament, were at the root of the distress.

On December 27th, 1814, Lord Albemarle wrote to Coke to urge that a requisition should be sent to the High Sheriff of the county to call a county meeting, in order to get up a petition against the continuance of the Property Tax, which pressed heavily on all classes of the community. "It would be a fine triumph," Lord

[1] John Wodehouse, born 1771. Afterwards Baron Kimberley.

Albemarle wrote, "to check a corrupt and profligate Court, and to overthrow a servile Ministry. . . . *I* had best not move the Resolutions, for I shall not be able to avoid being a little *strong*—and quite upon principle, for the Court cannot understand language which is not a little strong!" One thing, however, he urged was that the meeting should be confined to the question of the Property Tax, and should not embrace also the state of the agricultural interests. "The mixture of the latter with the former would lessen the interest upon each, and our opponents would withdraw the public attention from the Property Tax to a discussion upon the price of corn."

This precaution was extremely necessary. The country was even then in a state of ferment respecting a Bill which was said to be imminent in the House, and which became law the following February, forbidding the importation of wheat from abroad if the price were less than 80s. Such a law in the starving and impoverished state of the country was intensely unpopular; violent riots ensued, and tumultuous meetings with regard to it were held almost daily. But before that date, on January 15th, the meeting promoted by Lord Albemarle and Coke had been held successfully at Norwich. It was attended by all the owners of large estates and all contributors to the property tax, who protested against that tax as being unjust, unequal and iniquitous. A monster petition against it was forthwith set on foot throughout the county, which was to be signed by all classes and denominations of people, irrespective of party politics and of all questions upon which a division of interests might occur.

Extract from a Letter from Martin ffolkes Rishton to T. W. Coke.

"*March 3rd*, 1815.

"My dear Sir,

"I hope you have settled all our publick business to your satisfaction; you have most assuredly put down the Property Tax and a delightful addition have you made to the Assessed Taxes. We who vibrate in the middle station betwixt Prince and Peasant are now nearly lost, that class of subjects once the pride and boast of Britain, the impudent scions of Freedom and Independence, who were wont to rally round and support your Russells and your Sidneys, are now all but lost—scarcely remembered in the general blaze of Stars, Ribbons, huge standing armies and German blood-suckers.

"I have, however, a snug plan of my own for paying off the National Debt (not hinted at by Tiernay[1] or Vansittart[2]) and proving that an Increase of Taxes is a certain increase of Income if rightly considered and properly managed.

"I beg you will do me the honour of accepting a real Cheddar Cheese, old England's fare in days of yore; when every poor cottager could enjoy his home-brewed beer and sit under his own Fig Tree, and the ladies, at the same time, without any expense gather and sew their own aprons by way of summer apparel; but those happy days are past, never to return, until the most desirable of all blessings, a *General Bankruptcy*, takes place. Then, and not till then, our profligate expenditure must cease, German politics be exploded, huge standing armies be disbanded, and Peace, Freedom, and Independence once more take up their residence in this, their natural and constitutional abode. I shall not see it; but I think it must come to pass before Vansittart's four years of plagues

[1] George Tiernay (1761–1830). Held office under Addington, Grenville, Canning and Goderich.

[2] N. Vansittart, Chancellor of the Exchequer, afterwards raised to the peerage as Lord Bexley.

T. Barber Sculpt

Thomas William Coke, M.P.

from a portrait painted for Martin ffolkes Rishton, Circa 1816

have elapsed. His dire decree out-Herods Herod. The Tetrarch only murdered the Innocents, but our Ruler cuts off Man, Woman, and Child, in being and to come. I hear of nothing but emigrations to France to shun Taxes,—what an error in judgement! Bad as things are here, 'tis better to submit than run; we have still friends, native soil and *some* comforts left, and when the expense of moving a family is taken into consideration, the vast saving, to use a very vulgar expression, may be put into one's eye without injury to the sight. But this is all moonshine and not worth thinking about; in a week or two all our evils will be passed by and forgotten, since we have become such beasts of burthen, that, Donkey-like, the more we are laden the more patient we become. . . . The ladies, I hope, got safe to Holkham, without suffering from our rusticities, and found the baby thriving at Shottisham, notwithstanding the late demolition of windows. It is quite out of my way or I could inform them of dying maids and swains forlorn, of plighted faith and broken vows, of very rich women and some naughty men, but I do not chuse to be set down as a Chronicler; because why, I have a character to lose!

"Our best wishes attend you all to town where I hope the ladies will have a pleasant Campaign and keep a good look out for the Enemy who goeth about. —I see the newspapers give you a Great Grandson. Pray God they may once in an age speak truth.

"Ever, my dear Sir,

"Yours,

"M. Rishton."

Meanwhile, owing to the suppression of all vexed questions regarding the agricultural interest, the success of the Petition against the Property Tax was exceeding the most sanguine expectations of both Lord Albemarle and Coke; it was quickly signed by every one who could write, and Lord Albemarle soon sent

word to Coke that he had secured over a thousand signatures, representing every class and denomination, including "*stout supporters of the glorious Pitt system, and now smarting under it!*—This will be a triumph, for I assure you there was a sting in the tail of my letter and of the Petition too!"

Later, however, a check to his enthusiasm occurred. A deputation of thirty or forty yeomen sent to ask if Lord Albemarle and Mr. Coke and one or two other gentlemen of political celebrity would consent *not* to sign the petition, as they feared that such names, by apparently giving a party bias to the affair, might damage the cause at issue. This seemed the more reasonable since Coke, who was no believer in a free trade in grain, and had always voted for protection to agriculture, was reported to be a supporter of the unwelcome Corn Bill just passed, and shared the blame of the Government who had passed it. He and Lord Albemarle, therefore, readily consented not to send in their own names, but pointed out that no one must tamper with those names already sent in.

What was their horror, when the petition was made public, to find that not only had its construction been altered *and the Agricultural Distress made its principal object*, but that the names of their adherents had been deliberately omitted, to the number of fifty-five important signatures, both of gentlemen and yeomen. The general ferment was indescribable. "My neighbourhood is very indignant," wrote Lord Albemarle, despairingly. "Sir Robert Buxton has called upon me to ask who took the liberty to withdraw his name, which I had sent in. *Is this a blunder or a trick?* I have heard

from good authority that you are to be opposed at the next Dissolution of Parliament. Are the Tory names to the Requisition an enticement to one of their party to come forward at the Meeting, for a little popularity?"

There was, however, small doubt that the suppression of Whig signatures and the substitution of Tory ones was too systematic to be the result of accident, and as Coke was the representative of the agricultural interest, the change in the wording of the petition brought upon him much unpopularity. In the already unquiet state of the country, such an incident caused all the greater stir and added fuel to the general discontent. But explanation to the numbers who were offended was impracticable.

Lord Albemarle to T. W. Coke.

"My dear Coke, "QUIDENHAM, *March 5th* (1815).

"I write to you at the request of my whole neighbourhood.

"The Requisition signed by these few yeomen has given great offence in different ways. Numbers are indignant that the names of ourselves and of other gentlemen were omitted. This might a little injure the meeting but is not of serious consequence. But other ground of offence, upon which I am requested to write to you, is of very serious consequence.

"The Requisition signed by Farmers only and referring to Agricultural distress only, has been construed into a wish of the farmers to relieve themselves at the expense of other interests. The Ferment in Norwich is preparing, and it is much feared that your life is in great danger. I believe the conduct of [illegible] and of [illegible] not to be very straightforward. Their object was, in the first place, to exclude us, to gain popularity for themselves, and having mismanaged the business, they have involved all in confusion.

"Something must be done before you go to Norwich. You would be immediately attacked, and you know well that it is impossible to explain to a mob. I hope that you will come to me immediately, that we may make some previous arrangement.

"Yours ever affectionately,

"ALBEMARLE.

"Send me, or rather bring with you the copy of the Requisition with our names, which you sent to the Sheriff."

In spite of this warning it is strange to find that, ten days later, on March 16th, Coke and Lord Albemarle ventured to a show of cattle in the Castle ditch at Norwich, exhibited by the Norfolk Agricultural Society. They paid the penalty of their rashness. While they were looking at the cattle, in company with some friends, an anti-Corn Law mob, who were parading the town, appeared upon the hill, led by a man bearing a small loaf on a pole. Coke and Lord Albemarle, who at once saw their danger, saw, too, that escape was impossible. Directly the mob recognised Coke they made a rush towards him. "Let us seize the villain!" some of them cried, "and before night we will have his heart on a gridiron!"—a realistic touch no doubt borrowed from the methods of the French Revolution. A shower of stones accompanied the threat, followed by a battery of blows. At that moment a stalwart poacher whom Lord Albemarle had once befriended, rushed forward and interposed his body as a temporary barrier between the mob and their intended victims. For an instant the mob hesitated, and Coke and Lord Albemarle took advantage of this respite to scramble over some cattle-pens. Another volley of stones followed,

and the danger was imminent, when Kett, a butcher, with great presence of mind, opened the door of one of his pens, and let loose a large bull, having first twisted the animal's tail to enrage him. The beast, maddened by pain, went bellowing and galloping down the hill, while Coke, seizing the opportunity, followed coolly in its wake—one report says that, holding the tail of the animal, he passed through the very midst of the scattered rioters.

For a moment the pluck of this action impressed them, and there was even a disposition to cheer him; but their angry mood soon returning, they pursued him more fiercely than before. The two fugitives had already gained the yard of the Angel Inn, the gates of which were at once closed. The howling mob collected outside, and some of the roughs succeeded in breaking the upper part of the gates, so that they would have got into the yard had not the Sheriff, at the head of some plucky townspeople, attacked and routed them. Finding themselves thwarted there, the rioters next rushed round to the Market Place to try and effect an entrance at the front gates, but some constables who had hurriedly assembled managed to keep them at bay. The mob knew, however, that at four o'clock the mail coach would have to start for London, and they believed that Coke would try to make his escape hidden in the boot of the coach. As the hour approached, therefore, they collected round the front entrance in readiness. Denser and denser grew their ranks, till, by sheer force of their united strength, they succeeded in bursting the gates open, when, rushing in, they surrounded the coach and ransacked it. While this

was happening, however, their intended victims, taking advantage of the entire mob having collected round the front entrance, had made good an escape quietly by the back. Mounting their horses they galloped for their lives to the cross-roads where Lord Albemarle's coach had been ordered to wait in readiness, and so made their way safely to Quidenham.

The commotion in Norwich, meanwhile, increased. The quiet townspeople enrolled themselves as special constables, and with the Mayor at their head, tried to quell the riot. The Riot Act was read ineffectually. Windows were smashed, public buildings attacked and heads were broken. The hussars were called out twice in the course of the evening, and only after many hours was peace restored to the city.

Sir James Smith[1] *to T. W. Coke.*

"My dear Sir, "Norwich, *March 18th,* 1815.

"I rejoice to hear that you were seen riding safe out of town, and I hope you feel no harm from yesterday's adventures. The huzzars were in the market just before you went. They were sent home in the evening, but were obliged to be called back; a plain proof they were wanted; and many who hesitated yesterday now lament that they were not called sooner. I have been hearing the examination of some of the rioters. About 4 or 5 are let off on security for good behaviour—one is remanded, and the mob made a great effort to rescue him, but in vain. The rest, about 8 or 9, are to be examined on Monday, and some will certainly, I hear, be committed. The women and idle people are in consider-

[1] Sir James Edward Smith, F.R.S., President and Founder of the Linnæan Society; Member of the Academies of Stockholm, Upsal, Turin, Lisbon, Philadelphia, New York, etc.; of the Imperial Academy Naturæ Curiosorum; the Royal Academy of Sciences at Paris; and Hon. Member of the Horticultural Society of London, etc. etc.

able commotion, and it is thought expedient to keep a guard to-night in the market. All was quiet after bed-time last night. The Mayor's windows were broken in the evening and John Harvey's at Thorpe, also the hall window.

"I have taken the liberty to write a full narrative to Lord Anson, not knowing how much time you might have on your hands to-day, and I thought they would be anxious, at least, to hear all they could.

"I dare not tell you what I heard some of the women say they would do to you, but I am sure you would have made them relent when it came to the point.

"God bless you, my dear Sir, I am glad we can laugh at these matters, as you are safe. What sad news from France! Everybody says 'we must go to war'—but why?

"I hope Miss Coke was not alarmed about you. You must not come here any more at present.

"Pray accept our most sincere congratulations and good wishes,

"And believe me ever,

"Yr. most faithful,

"J. E. Smith.

"Either mine or Plumtre's servant heard some of the mob say they would have your life."

Lord Sidmouth afterwards, on behalf of the Government, thanked the hussars for their services, and on March 29th, at Thetford Assizes, the Grand Jury announced that a public subscription, not exceeding a pound a person, would be raised for the purpose of bringing to justice the instigators of the attack upon Mr. Coke.

Yet the malcontents had had small justification for their animosity against him. That very March Coke had redoubled his efforts to promote economic reform, and at a second great meeting in Norwich had urged the reduction of the military establishment and of the

war taxes which were impoverishing the country. Still more, during this period of 1815–16, which was notorious for the misery and poverty then prevalent throughout the kingdom, upon the Holkham estate both were unknown. On January 29th, after the Holkham audit, the Duke of Bedford,[1] writing to Coke, remarked: "I rejoice to hear of the satisfactory state of your audit, and that your numerous tenantry are not, at this period of general distress, in arrears. Nothing can prove more decisively the advantages of the system of Agriculture which you have been able by Example and perseverance to establish."

But in order to appreciate the full significance of this statement at that date, it is necessary to glance at the conditions which were then almost universally existent. In 1815 the summer had been too premature. The game-book at Holkham records how, on March 6th, a full-blown apricot blossom was gathered, and on April 4th a honeysuckle in full bloom was plucked; while on April 7th occurs the entry: "The heat was so oppressive, we dined at Holkham without a fire"—the peculiarity of which event can, perhaps, only be realised by those acquainted with the bleakness of that coast, and the coldness of the house before the adoption of the modern method of heating it. The following year the weather afforded as disastrous a contrast. To accentuate the already impoverished state of the country, cold winds and incessant rain prevailed throughout the months when the harvest should have been going forward, and in October the grain was still lying rotting upon the ground all through the midland and many

[1] John, sixth Duke of Bedford, b. 1766, succeeded his brother Francis 1802.

other counties. The price of wheat rose to 103s. a quarter; in one parish in Dorsetshire 419 inhabitants out of 575 were receiving relief, while in consequence of the almost universal distress, serious food riots continued in most parts of the country.

Yet this year 1816, when the distress was believed to have reached its culminating point, was the year of Dr. Rigby's visit to Holkham, when he was so impressed with the richness of the crops there, the wonderful absence of weeds, the fine flocks, the wealth and contentment of the tenants. That same July, after again staying at Holkham, the Duke of Bedford could only compare the poverty of even the Woburn estate with the prosperity which he had everywhere seen upon Coke's property. "Since I left Holkham, I have witnessed nothing but disheartening prospects," he writes, while describing the deplorable distress of his own farmers, the impossibility of letting his farms, and the defalcation of even the low rents which he had been prepared to accept. "Norfolk is, at this moment, a splendid exception to the rest of the Kingdom, and you must derive infinite satisfaction in the reflection that 38 years of persevering and unwearied efforts in promoting a beneficial System of Husbandry, should have created such a mass of Capital among the Tenantry of Norfolk as to enable them to bear up against the evils which are overwhelming every part of the Empire."

It was just at this date that Coke secured the services of a man who for sixteen years proved his right hand in the management of his estate. In 1813 Coke had visited Lord Chesterfield at Bradley, in Derbyshire, and had been much struck by the capital manner in which

that estate was managed by Francis Blakie, the Earl's agent. Thenceforward he corresponded with Blakie on matters agricultural, and became still more impressed with his intelligence. In 1813 Lord Chesterfield died, and as the young Earl became a ward in Chancery, the Duke of Bedford, and Coke, thereupon wrote simultaneously to offer Blakie the management of their respective estates. Blakie asked for time to consider both proposals, but after a visit to Holkham he no longer hesitated; he refused the Duke's offer and accepted that of Mr. Coke.

"Handsome Blakie" forthwith became a well-known figure upon the Holkham estate, where he was adored by the farmers and trusted by Coke, who stated him to be of "unrivalled ability and uncorruptible integrity." Nor was this confidence misplaced. Blakie entered into the spirit which ruled Holkham; he worked for the good of the tenants and the good of his master with unwavering fidelity. Two anecdotes are recorded respecting him, which prove his austere honesty. While still in the service of Lord Chesterfield, the Agricultural Society, under the presidency of Sir John Sinclair, voted a gold medal to Blakie for an experiment carried out at Lord Chesterfield's expense. Blakie refused it promptly, saying he was not entitled to it, since his experiment had been carried out with his master's money. Later, at one of the Holkham Sheep-shearings, the judges awarded him a first prize for the invention of an implement for weeding, when he again declined to accept any reward. Being forced to state why he did so, he explained that he had but suggested the improvement to another man, who had perfected it, and that, moreover, since the exhibit had been made at

FRANCIS BLACKIE

Steward to T. W. Coke at Holkham

Mr. Coke's cost, it could not be brought into fair competition with exhibits which were made at the cost of the exhibitors. Coke respected his scruples, and ordered a silver tankard to be given to a man who had perfected the instrument,—which, it may be mentioned, was named the "Grubber," in distinction from another weeder known as the "Tormentor."

Blakie retired in 1832 and went to live at St. Helen's, Melrose, but to the last day of his life his heart was in Norfolk. He adored the memory of Mr. Coke, and looked upon Miss Coke as his own child. He always greedily devoured the pages of the *Norwich Mercury*, and his letters to Norfolk friends show an insatiable craving for Holkham news. He wrote many pamphlets on agriculture, and mentions in one letter how he was asked to write an Agricultural Life of Mr. Coke for circulation in the United States. When Bacon, however, wanted to put Blakie's portrait and an account of Blakie's work in his book upon Holkham, the suggestion was sternly refused. "Sir," wrote Blakie indignantly, "you must give honour where honour alone is due, and I refuse to presume ever to be mentioned in the same page with my great and dearly-loved master Mr. Coke."

The tenantry at Holkham, when he left, gave him a handsome farewell present of silver, with the testimony that: "During the sixteen years he has presided over the Holkham property he has not in any degree compromised, but on the contrary has greatly contributed to strengthen that noble sentiment which has ever been the favourite motto of its worthy and liberal possessor:

'A GOOD UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN LANDLORD AND TENANT.'"

CHAPTER XXIV

WILLIAM ROSCOE AND THE HOLKHAM LIBRARY

1810–1816

Ætat 56–62

IN the year 1810, which had witnessed the death of Windham, Coke had sustained a loss of a more intimate character in the death of his mother, who had survived her husband, Wenman Coke, thirty-four years; and the following year, 1811, died the eccentric Lady Mary Coke, who had survived her ill-fated husband for about half a century.

After giving up her house in Notting Hill, Lady Mary had, for a time, a house which looked on to the Green Park; next she moved to a house in Chelsea, then to one in Berkeley Square, and finally, having thus divided her time pretty equally between town and country, she died at a house in Chiswick. Her career was consistently peculiar to the last. At eighty-two she is described as "a most astonishing woman, and still as violent and absurd as ever, her faculties, her senses, and her nonsenses just the same"; while George Selwyn adds his testimony to that of Wraxall that to the end she was remarkable for extraordinary personal beauty and charm. During her last days, despite all her wealth, she contrived to live in a peculiarly un-

comfortable manner; she occupied two small rooms, in one of which was a tent bed so sunk in a recess that it was with difficulty she could contrive to get in and out of it. All around her was a great confusion; in her drawers, it was subsequently discovered, were a medley of wax-candles, pins, tea, sugar, letters and rubbish of every kind, mingled with bank-notes, guineas and dollars. As her illness approached its close, she refused to change her dress or to lie down; so that, finally, she died sitting upright, and wearing upon her head a high-crowned beaver hat adorned with plumes.

She was buried in the Argyle vault in Westminster Abbey, and it is said that her funeral cost between £200 and £300.

Forthwith, along the lonely corridor leading to the turret room at Holkham, which she had occupied during some unhappy days of her married life, her ghost was reported to pace at night, vanishing near the empty chamber where she had once sighed and wept unpitied. And although Lady Jane, a more reasonable spectre, is believed to have ceased haunting Longford, Lady Mary, contumacious when alive, was not to prove more amenable after death, and to this day it is said that her eccentric spirit, refusing to be "laid," flits, weeps and finally vanishes into the darkness of the silent passage which she trod so mournfully during life.

About the very date when Lady Mary's ghost is accredited with having first taken possession of that corridor connecting her former turret room with the library, a work was set in motion there which resulted in a constant influx of visitors to a hitherto deserted part of the house.

For some time past the valuable library at Holkham had been neglected. Coke had, indeed, added to it occasionally by the purchase of rare books or missals, but his was essentially the life of the worker, not of the student; with his mind full of pressing political and agricultural claims he could not devote to literature the attention which, as a man of leisure, he might have bestowed upon it; it was due only to a chain of unforeseen events that the library was at length set in order, and its treasures renovated so that they were preserved for posterity.

Sir James Smith had long been a visitor at Holkham. Born in Norwich in 1759, his maternal grandfather was Mr. Kinderly, the energetic chaplain appointed by Lady Leicester, who used to walk to and fro between Norwich and Holkham. As a dreamy, delicate child, James Smith inherited from his mother the passionate love of flowers which afterwards made him one of the famous men of his day. When Linnæus died, he bought the library and collection of the great Swede for 900 guineas, and brought it to England at great personal risk, while the King of Sweden pursued the treasure with a fast ship. James Smith became, in consequence, the Founder and President of the Linnæan Society; and, as a man of local and of European celebrity, he attracted the notice and gained the friendship of Coke. Lady Smith relates how "Mr. Coke's friendship for Sir James began the year in which the latter became an inhabitant of the same county, and was perpetuated by annual and perennial acts of kindness during the remainder of Sir James' life."

Sir James, by his own account, from the first con-

JAMES EDWARD SMITH, M.D. F.R.S.
PRESIDENT OF THE LINNEAN SOCIETY

ceived a great affection for "the Norfolk Patriot"; and admiring Coke in both his public and his private capacity, he became anxious to bring about a meeting between him and another man for whom he had also a profound respect. This man was William Roscoe.

Roscoe's career had been remarkable, in that his natural abilities and worth had created for him a position which, in view of his origin, might have appeared unattainable. His father had kept a public-house, the "Bowling Green," in the neighbourhood of Liverpool, to which he united the trade of a small market gardener. Young Roscoe, partly owing to his intellectual capacity and to the success which greeted his *Life of Lorenzo de Medici*, partly to the genuine respect in which his character was held by all who knew him, soon occupied a prominent position not only among the literary men of his day, but, what was perhaps more remarkable, even in Liverpool, where he resided in a house named Allerton, not far from the home of his early years.

Besides his literary tastes, Roscoe, no doubt as a result of his early training, took a great interest in agriculture, and became a friend of many leading agriculturists. Among these, G. Tollet, Esq., of Bently Hall, invited him to stay there in 1816 for the express purpose of meeting Mr. Coke; but Roscoe was unable to accept, and the invitation appears to have been repeated without success. Coke's own suggestion that Roscoe should visit Holkham was also unavailing. Partly from diffidence, partly from stress of work, Roscoe refused.

Sir James Smith, however, became determined to

effect a meeting between two men who he was convinced could not fail to appreciate each other. His consequent correspondence with Roscoe has already been printed in his Life,[1] but two letters may be quoted here, because they throw an interesting light on his view of Coke's character.

Sir James Smith to Mr. Roscoe.

"Norwich, *Sept. 7th*, 1812.

"My dear friend,

"Be not alarmed at seeing a letter from me so soon after my last. We have been spending ten days at Holkham, and I write now at the earnest desire of Mr. Coke to try to persuade you to come to see him and us. He says you have given him some hopes, but have as yet only disappointed him. Now, I can conceive nothing more delightful than spending a fortnight with you under his roof, and have promised him to do so whenever you come. To contemplate his pictures and statues, to rummage amongst his books, drawings, and manuscripts and prints—(where we every day find treasures unknown before)—is extremely agreeable, and he kindly entrusts all his keys to me in full confidence. I found a case of the *earliest* printed books which no one had examined since the time of his great-uncle, Lord Leicester. Such MSS. of Dante, drawings of the old masters, treasures of European history—you have no idea! The house is one of the finest in Europe, and its riches are inexhaustible. But of all things the owner is the best worth your seeing and knowing. He is so amiable, with all the *first gloss* of human affection and feeling upon his heart; so devoid of all selfishness that, with the early and constant prosperity he has experienced, his character is next to a miracle; and he has an agreeable liveliness and

[1] *Memoir and Correspondence of Sir James Edward Smith*, edited by Lady Smith, 1832.

playfulness of manner that nobody is more entertaining. You would exactly *suit in* with your ideas of men and things. Do give me some hopes that you will come this autumn with Mrs. Roscoe and some of your family. We will meet at Holkham; and if you can condescend (without breaking your neck) to our 'low estate' we will strive to rival even Holkham in the heartiness of our welcome. Do, my dear Friend, think of all this; but do not let it be in frost and snow. I was laid up there last December by a cold caught in going.

"Ever most affectionately yours,

"J. E. SMITH."[1]

To which Roscoe replied from Allerton:—

"So ensnaring was the apparatus,
The powerful pothooks did so move him,
That, will he, nil he, to the *great house*
He went as if the Devil drove him.

"It would not, however, be so much for the sake of the 'great house,' nor for all it contains, though nothing in its way could be more attractive—that I should wish to visit Holkham. It would be with a view of paying my respects to its excellent and distinguished owner, and of meeting you under his roof—temptations which I feel I shall hardly be able to resist. At present, however, I cannot speak very decisively. Neither my wife nor myself are at present very well, and when I shall be able to venture abroad so far before the winter I cannot say."

To which Sir James replied:—

"Ah! my friend, the vision which I ventured to contemplate was too bright to be realised! Yet your letter almost tempted me to hope,

'Though hope were lost.'

[1] Quoted in *Life of William Roscoe*, by his son Henry Roscoe, 1833, Vol. II, p. 21.

As to this disappointment, *you* may well bear it, because you know not what it is. 'Tis not the enjoyments of taste, literature, luxury, and novelty that I lament—it is the losing the pleasure of seeing you beloved by so excellent a creature, so congenial, to you. You will find such a *mine* of happiness of which you know scarcely anything. Mr. Coke is out of the sight and the conception of the world in general, and I can give you no higher proof of my esteem and affection for yourself, than by speaking of him to you without reserve. How well did he express his own character the other day when he said he 'dreaded nothing so much as self.—Self is the worst tyrant in the world.' Mr. Coke is I think one of the most *gracefully kind* and benevolent men, to all in their proper places I ever saw.

"As to politics, mankind, farming, pictures, you and he would never fail of conversation; but these are smaller matters. . . . You see, hope will revive in my breast; do not blast it again. Our Bishop you must come and admire; I fear he goes to town before the Spring; he is here now. Alas! you will smile at this letter and some will think me stark mad; if so, God grant I may never be cured! Let me hear from you, I have fifty more things to say, but for the present adieu.

"Yours ever and ever,

"James E. Smith."[1]

Roscoe, although his time was so fully occupied, sent to Lady Smith a copy of verses which he had written during a sleepless night, with the request that if she approved of them she would forward another copy to Miss Coke. The verses were a song upon "A Ball given by the Friends of Mr. Brougham and Mr. Creevy in Liverpool, November, 1812."

[1] *Memoir and Correspondence of Sir James Smith*, Vol. II, pp. 348-9.

To this request Sir James Smith replied: "My wife answers for Miss Coke. I subjoin an epigram on Holkham, which is sure of pleasing my fair young friend, who is worthy of her father. I need say no more for her.

> Leicester, high priest of fortune and of taste,
> Raised fairy scenes amid the desert waste;
> Holkham's chief grace owns not *his* magic rod—
> 'An honest man's the noblest work of God!'"[1]

Sir James Smith, however, was not to be thwarted in the object he had at heart. In 1814 he spent another fortnight at Holkham, and devoted two hours every day to examining the MSS. with Coke. The result was that he wrote yet more urgently to Roscoe, and gave a glowing account of the treasures which awaited his inspection at Holkham. "How many things I have to talk over with you, and not a few to show you!" he concluded his long letter. "You must contrive not to limit your time; you have found it difficult to get to this charming place, but you have no idea how difficult it is to get away!" His importunity had its reward, and Roscoe at length consented to pay a visit which materially affected his after-life and fortunes.

His son relates[2] how he found his reception at Holkham most gratifying, and how the society assembled there was peculiarly congenial. Not only had Sir James Smith and Dr. Parr been specially invited to meet him, but also many of the distinguished literary men of the day with whom he had not previously been

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 352.
[2] *Life of William Roscoe*, by his son, Henry Roscoe, Vol. II, p. 84.

acquainted, and with whom he now made friendships which proved lasting.

The morning after his arrival he at once proceeded to enter upon the task of exploring the literary treasures of which he had heard so much. Immediately after breakfast the party assembled and started for the upper library.

One can picture that strangely assorted group of eager men—Coke, urbane and attentive; Sir James Smith, expectant and amiably elated at having accomplished his great wish; Dr. Parr, no doubt pompous and verbose as usual; Lord Erskine,[1] witty and loquacious; Roscoe, serious and absorbed as was his wont; and the gentle, benevolent Bishop of Norwich. These, with others whose names have not been preserved, proceeded along the corridor of which Lady Mary's ghost had so recently taken possession, and *en route* noted as a curious fact, that in a house elsewhere immune from fire, Thomas Coke, Lord Leicester, had deposited his literary treasures in the one place exposed to this danger, for there could be little doubt that in the event of a conflagration—although it might not be possible for the flames to spread to the rest of the building—the long passages adjoining the library, with their wooden rafters, would burn like matchwood.

Happily, this had never been put to the test; and soon, entering the quiet room where Windham used to read, the party became deep in the treasures which it contained. Coke and Sir James Smith had placed in

[1] Thomas, youngest son of Henry Davis, tenth Earl of Buchan, born 1750, served in both Army and Navy; called to the Bar 1778; Attorney-General to the Prince of Wales in 1802; Lord Chancellor 1806; died November 17, 1823.

readiness some of the MSS. which they had discovered, the shelves were laid bare and rare folios brought to light; boxes which had remained packed since the days of Thomas Coke were opened one after another and their contents greedily examined; while each moment Roscoe became more and more delighted with the value and scarcity of the volumes placed before him.

There was the old library of Sir Edward Coke with the MSS. which were written by his own hand, eight copies in MS. of the Registrum Brevium and several of the Statutes. There were the books which he must have used as a student and those belonging to the days of his fame, one of which bears curious evidence of his contempt for his great rival Bacon. For Bacon had presented Sir Edward with a first copy of his *Novum Organum* bearing the title *Instauratio Magna*, and containing the device of a ship sailing. Upon the title page Sir Edward wrote—

> Edw. Coke ex dono auctoris
> Auctori consilium
> Instaurare paras veterum documenta sophorum
> Instaura leges justitiamque prius.[1]

And over the device—

> It deserveth not to be read in schools,
> But to be freighted in the Shippe of Fooles.

But besides the relics of the Lord Chief Justice there were rare and beautiful works of early Italian, French

[1] Edward Coke, the gift of the author
Advice to the Author
You are proposing to reconstruct the teaching of wise men of old;
Reconstruct the laws and justice first.

and English poetry and history. There were strange old missals, some with covers of solid gold and silver, ornamented with jewels and profusely illustrated, which Coke himself had purchased; one so minute that it was pronounced to be probably the smallest and most exquisite specimen in existence; and some again full of strange pictures illustrating monkish legends of an apocryphal history of Christ. A typical legend in this latter work relates how the Child Christ captured and played with sunbeams, uninjured, but how, when some other children tried to emulate him, they were seriously burnt. They thereupon fled to their parents in alarm, who, in order to protect them from Christ, shut them up in a house; but on going to let them out again, found that owing to a somewhat sinister exhibition of Divine power, all the children had been changed into pigs through Christ's miraculous agency. The pictures which accompany this and similar legends are most curious, and still more curious are those which illustrate a strange Old English manuscript of the time of Edward I. These latter represent episodes in the Old and New Testament, executed with extraordinary spirit, and reproducing very faithfully the dresses, customs and manners of the period—not to which they refer—but at which they were drawn. The seekers found, besides, many other rare MSS. of the sacred writings; a remarkable MS. of the Hebrew Law, or Pentateuch, written in Hebrew on deer skins, a hundred and six feet by two feet and an inch wide, pronounced to be an Eastern transcript of great antiquity; an ancient copy of the Evangelists in Greek, on vellum, belonging to the ninth

or tenth century; and a MS. of the Vulgate, written on vellum for Pope Clement VII towards the close of the fourteenth century, and ornamented with beautiful miniatures and borders in gold and colours.

Besides these and many other rare specimens of sacred writings, they further discovered a *Decameron* of Boccacco on vellum, with miniature and illuminated designs of the fifteenth century; and, what roused still keener interest, three MSS. of great value: the first, an autograph treatise "On the Nature, Force, and Weight of Water," composed and transcribed on paper by Leonardo da Vinci, *alla macina*, or from right to left, so that it could only be read with ease by the assistance of a mirror; the second, a volume of original drawings by Raphael of the architectural remains of ancient Rome, executed at the desire of Leo X, mentioned by Camolli in his life of the painter as having been in possession of "Tomaso Coke, Lord Leicester," and of which Roscoe had already given some account in his *Life of Lorenzo de' Medici;* and the third discovery—which excited Roscoe more than all besides—the superb copy of Livy, before referred to, which had once been the property of Alfonso, King of Naples, and which was presented to him by Cosmo de' Medici, Pater Patriæ, on the establishment of peace between Naples and Florence.

The story connected with this, which Roscoe had already told in his book, is that Cosmo de' Medici sent this MS. to Alfonso, with whom he was at variance, in order to heal the breach between them. The King's physician, fearing that the book was poisoned, implored the King not to touch it. But the King showed a

supreme contempt for their warnings, and when they remonstrated with him more warmly, pointing out the grave danger which he was incurring, he exclaimed: "Leave off your trifling! The mind of a King is not to be governed by the judgment of any private individual; it was well said by Homer that a Sovereign is always under the protection of Jove." So the manuscript remained in the possession of Alfonso, and peace was established between the two countries.[1]

Roscoe's excitement knew no bounds when he found that he was handling the historic volume which he had already described from legend only. It was a magnificent MS. on vellum, highly ornamented, and, still clearly legible in it, are the notes in the handwriting of Alfonso. "That I should have had the good fortune," Coke relates that Roscoe exclaimed, "of seeing and turning over at my leisure such a beautiful MS. as the Livy is almost incredible!" "What a wonderful thing," wrote Roger Wilbraham, upon hearing the news, "that such a beautiful MS. as the Livy, the peace-offering of one great sovereign to another, already mentioned by Roscoe himself in his *Life of Lorenzo de' Medici*, should have presented itself so strangely and so delightfully to his eyes! It becomes much more precious for its history."

Day by day Roscoe haunted the upper library, and day by day he made discoveries which surpassed his most eager expectations. His enthusiasm grew, and he soon offered his services in arranging the dilapidated

[1] The authority for this anecdote is Petrus Crinitus, who wrote in the time of Lorenzo de' Medici, and it may be found in his curious treatise "De Honesta Disiplina."

books and manuscripts which had been imported by Thomas Coke from abroad. Many of them had been stripped of their covers before being embarked from the Continent, in order, it is supposed, to avoid the duties on importation, and some of them had been considerably injured, so that they required the greatest skill in arranging. It was necessary that the whole of the volumes should pass through the hands of the binder; while a great number of them were defaced by creases so that the leaves required to be stretched in a frame, and the injured parts covered with a solution of vellum. It was accordingly arranged that the books should be sent to a competent man named Jones, at Liverpool, where they were to be under Roscoe's special supervision.

"Without compliment," Coke wrote to Roscoe, on receiving the first batch of books returned by the latter, "I verily believe there is not another man in the kingdom to be found equal to yourself, or capable indeed, of undertaking so laborious and great a work as that which you have so kindly volunteered. Is it then possible to imagine me capable of refusing so singular an opportunity as now presents itself in committing to your care all the manuscripts one after another, enhanced as they must be in value after passing through your hands? To say how much I am indebted to you and delighted with those you have returned, is quite impossible; it only makes me every hour of my life more impatient to have them all re-bound and examined.

"I did not delay a moment after my return in looking them over, and the moment I had done so I mounted to the upper library to select as many as would fill the box, which I sent, addressed to you at Liverpool, yesterday, containing thirty-two books,

many of which you will find it necessary to divide into separate volumes."[1]

Three binders were employed under Jones, and the delicate work progressed satisfactorily, Coke sending the MSS. in relays.

Soon after his visit to Holkham, Roscoe presented Coke with a beautiful copy of his *Leo X*, in which he wrote the following verses :—

Though clothed in varnish'd vest and tricked with gold
To Holkham's splendid halls thou take thy way,
Think not my book that this thy proud display
Will aught avail thee. There shall thou behold
The speaking train of bards and sages old,
Immortal sons of Learning's happier day,
And own that thou, amidst their bright array,
Art all unworthy there to be enrolled.
There, then, abashed, at modest distance lie,
Till he, the master, with benignant eye,
Shall o'er thy leaves in pleased attention bend ;
Enough, if, firm to truth and freedom's cause,
He finds thee worthy of his kind applause,
And in the *Author* recognise the *friend*.

T. W. Coke to Sir James Smith.

"My dear Sir James, "HOLKHAM, *Feb. 9th*, 1815.

"*Leo X* most magnificently bound, made his appearance yesterday, and will be more highly prized than any MS. in my possession. To you, I may fairly say I am more particularly indebted for this most estimable gift ; I should probably never have known Mr. Roscoe, if it had not been for your kindness in bringing us together ; it has established a mutual regard between us which I am satisfied will

[1] *Life of William Roscoe*, edited by his son, Henry Roscoe, Vol. II, p. 90.

be pleasing to us both during the remainder of our respective lives. To say the truth, he is a most extraordinary personage; such a heart, such suavity of disposition, such courage in the pursuit of what is right, such pure philanthropy are seldom combined in one individual. Imagine, then, my dear sir, the store I set by the present of his book. How preferable such a testimony of esteem from such a man to the baubles which may be derived to a cringing sycophant from a profligate Court!

"If I live and have my health, I will do myself the pleasure of passing a few days with him at Allerton in September or October next: could you not accompany me? I will not keep you from home for more than five or six weeks. You will be pleased to hear that I have consigned to Roscoe's care four dozen of my MS. to be bound.

"Eliza and the ladies unite with me in kind regards to yourself and Lady Smith, and believe me, my dear Sir, with great esteem,

"Yours sincerely,

"T. W. Coke."[1]

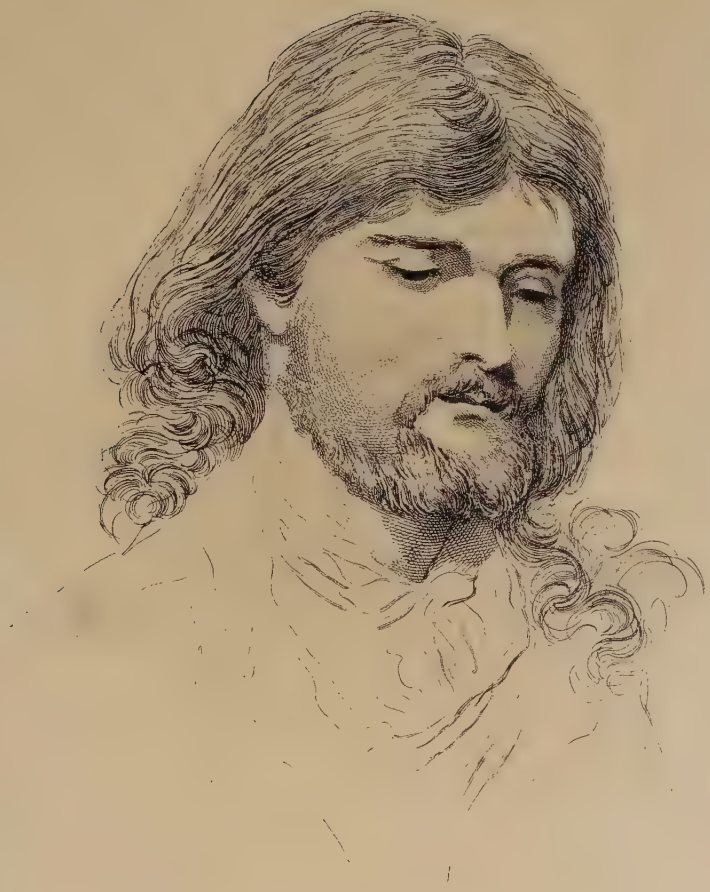
Coke's proposed visit to Allerton took place the following autumn, and Sir James Smith and Dr. Parr were of the company, which included a number of distinguished men. It was during this visit that a funny incident occurred.

In 1806 Roscoe had discovered an extraordinary Welsh fisher-lad, by name Richard Roberts Jones, of Aberdaron. He was an abnormal creature, an unparalleled instance of profound learning, united to profound stupidity. In his little fishing-boat off the coast of Wales, by the age of twenty, he had acquired a

[1] *Life of William Roscoe,* ed. by his son, Henry Roscoe, Vol. II, p. 96.

thorough knowledge of Greek, Latin and Hebrew, had read the Iliad, Hesiod, Theocritus, and had studied the connection of Greek with Hebrew. He could read Latin with the greatest facility and translate it into English or Welsh; he could read Italian and converse fluently in French. Yet with all this astonishing learning, in daily life he was so stupid as to border on idiocy; he was absolutely ignorant of the ordinary decencies of life, while he was so uncouth in appearance as to look scarcely human.

Having met with kindness when calling at Allerton to sell his fish, he fled from Wales, where he said he was persecuted—which was the case on account of his peculiarities—and threw himself on the protection of Roscoe. Utterly at a loss what to do with his inconvenient protégé, Roscoe first vainly tried to initiate him into the conventionalities of existence. He provided the freak with a bed, but Richard crept under it instead of into it; he gave him proper clothes, but could scarcely persuade him to wear them in the place of the filthy rags to which he was accustomed; and he tried, with little success, to induce him to trim his hair and wash himself. He also secured employment for Richard in a saw-pit, but so stupid was the lad that he could not be made to comprehend that, in order to remain standing upright when his work necessitated a fresh position, he must move his feet as well as his arms. So he overbalanced and lay on the ground holloing and complaining of the cruel manner in which he was being used. In short, he was, as Roscoe himself said, the most astonishing instance of "erudition seldom exhibited within the walls of schools and universities,



RICHARD ROBERTS JONES

united with a want of common sense amounting to idiocy."[1]

When Coke stayed at Allerton in 1815 a number of distinguished men, including Dr. Parr, were invited to meet him. One day at dinner the conversation happened to turn upon a little Brazilian weasel, which had lately been given to Roscoe. Roscoe, calling to one of his sons who was seated at the end of the table, told him to "*Bring in the Beast!*" The boy, not having heard the previous conversation, at once concluded that his father's epithet could apply to no one but Richard Roberts. A few moments later the door opened, and the company were electrified by the sight of a creature which resembled nothing human, unless it was a prehistoric man.

Roscoe, considerably embarrassed, endeavoured to explain the presence of his uncouth guest, and Richard was brought up to Coke and Dr. Parr, who both proceeded to talk to and question him. Both were equally astonished at his answers and at the profundity of his knowledge. Indeed, so impressed was Dr. Parr that the next day he tackled Richard on his own account, and having got the lad alone, plunged into the darkest recesses of ancient learning. The conversation drifted into Hebrew—its peculiar construction and its analogous tongues—and the Doctor, to his great discomfiture,

[1] Roscoe described him as "one of the most extraordinary beings that ever secured my notice. A poor Welsh fisher-lad, as ragged as a colt, and as uncouth as any being that has a semblance of humanity. But beneath such an exterior is a mind cultivated not only beyond all reasonable expectation, but beyond all possible conception" (*Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 283). Roscoe afterwards wrote a *Memoir of Richard Roberts Jones*, printed in London, 1822.

actually found that the freak had the advantage over him. But when Richard proceeded to make an inroad into Chaldee, Parr decided that it was best to save his laurels while there was yet time. First, characteristically, thrusting some money into the hands of his uncouth rival, Parr, therefore, fled precipitately. But, as his ill-luck would have it, Coke shortly afterwards encountered Richard, and having heard of Parr's intention to interview the latter, and curious to learn the impression the great scholar had created upon the mind of the freak, Coke inquired from the youth what he thought of the learned Doctor?—"Oh," replied Richard, very indifferently, "he is, perhaps, less ignorant than most men!"—a verdict which, retailed by Coke, occasioned much merriment at the Doctor's expense.

The year 1815, in more serious ways, appears to have been a somewhat unlucky one for Dr. Parr. In the following December, in anticipation of the approaching festivity of his birthday, he dispatched a pathetic confession to his "honoured Patron."

"*December* 30*th*, 1815.

"The person who writes for me is a pretty good Scholar, a very ingenious Man, and in all matters of Church and State a genuine Whig; and having been my Pupil, he retained his good principles during all the Trials of an Education at Oxford.

"Now, my birthday is to be celebrated at his house, and my request is that you would have the goodness to give directions for your Magnificent Present of Game to be forwarded according to a form which the Oxonian shall write in legible Characters—

"The Revd. John Bartlam,
"Alchester,
"Warwickshire.

"To be forwarded by the Kidderminster Coach to the Old Bell in Holborn.

"May I beg your permission to have the Game so forwarded as to reach Bartlam's house on Wednesday the 24th? The Kidderminster Coach leaves London every evening precisely at a quarter before six. The party is large, and a great majority are Whigs, and my Scribe knows well that no Tory would be admitted unless he were a man of real worth.

"The distresses of the Times are frightful, and come home to me Terribly. Instead of receiving rent from either of my livings, I am compelled to pay my Curate's income Tax and other Taxes, together with Charity Subscriptions, and some ecclesiastical Charities, so that I shall probably be £160 out of pocket. For as to violence with the Tenants, it will do no good. I suspect that they will rely rather unhandsomely on my forbearance. But this loss of rent at the close of the year, together with the loss of £150 which I borrowed for a Friend and which, upon the failure of the Friend, I repaid, together with interest, put me to great difficulties.

"My Courage, however, is not thrown down, and I shall do the best I can.—Yesterday I had to dine with me three Parsons, of whom one was a good Scholar, the other a great Scholar, and all three resolute advocates for Freedom and Toleration.—The great Scholar threw in my way a temptation which I had not virtue enough to resist. He proposed to me to purchase, with some advantage, of Champagne sufficient to last me the whole of my Life.—I fell into the Snare, and I must pay three-and-thirty pounds, and this, too, before my Parochial Rents come in, as they will do about March. I will not, be assured, trouble you without absolute necessity, for after experiencing your kindness in such numerous and important instances I should think it not only unhandsome, but unjust and ungrateful to trespass upon your long-tried and valuable goodwill towards me. I beseach you not to give any other answer but that which is entirely satisfactory to yourself."

Coke's answer to this naive confession of poverty, generosity and extravagance is not difficult to imagine; but scarcely had he reinstated Dr. Parr in a condition of pecuniary tranquillity, than a more urgent object of charity presented itself to him. At the end of the year 1816, the banking house in which Roscoe was a partner failed. Owing to the honourable manner in which Roscoe behaved at this crisis, he was practically ruined, and was obliged to sell his valuable library and pictures, the collection of a lifetime. Coke bought a large number of the books, and also bought three pictures which were the gems of the collection. One was a head of Christ by Leonardo da Vinci, one was a Madonna and Child by Ghirlandajo, with a frieze by Michael Angelo, and the third was a portrait of Leo X and his two brothers, Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, and his nephew Cardinal de' Rossi, by Andrea del Sarto.

To this last there is a curious story attached. It appears that when Federigo, Duke of Mantua, passed through Florence to pay his respects to Clement VII, he saw a picture by Raphael hanging in the palace of the Medici. He was so delighted with it that, on his arrival in Rome, he begged the Pope, who was then the head of the Medici family (and one of the persons represented in the picture) to give it to him. The Pope consented, and sent word to Ottaviano de' Medici at Florence to forward the picture to Mantua. Ottaviano, however, was most unwilling that the family should be deprived of such a treasure, so he sent privately to Andrea del Sarto and begged him to make a copy of it. This copy proved so like the original that it was practically impossible to tell them apart. Ottaviano,

therefore, hid the original by Raphael, and sent to Mantua the copy by Andrea del Sarto. The Duke was perfectly satisfied, and even Giulio Romano, the favourite pupil of Raphael, who was then resident at Mantua, did not discover the deception.

Some time afterwards, however, Vasari, who was then a young and rising artist, was anxious to make the acquaintance of Giulio Romano, and calling upon him in Mantua was received by him with great civility. Giulio showed him the best works of art which the city afforded, and finally, as the greatest treasure in the place, exhibited to him the supposed picture by Raphael. "A beautiful work," agreed Vasari, "but not by the hand of Raphaello." "How so?" cried Giulio; "is it possible that, as a pupil of Raphaello, I should not recognise the touches of my own pencil on it?" "None the less, you are mistaken," persisted Vasari; "this picture is the work of Andrea del Sarto, and as a proof of it, there is a mark on it which I will show you."

Now Vasari had studied under Andrea del Sarto at the time the copy was made, and upon the picture being taken down he pointed out the mark which he had mentioned, and which proved beyond doubt who was the painter of the picture. Giulio's astonishment was great; but he declared that "he valued the copy no less than the picture of Raphaello himself; nay, even more, because it is incredible that one painter should so perfectly imitate the manner of another."

Thus it was that the picture by Raphael remained at Florence till it was carried away many years afterwards to the collection of the Louvre; while that of Andrea

del Sarto afterwards passed into the possession of the Duke of Parma, whence it was transferred to Naples and formed part of the royal collection at Papo di Monte. There it remained till that collection was dispersed by revolutionary troubles, when it is presumed it found its way, in common with many other pictures from the same source, into this country, where it became the property of a respectable dealer in London, who never would part with it in his lifetime; but after whose death it was purchased by Roscoe, and, from him, by Coke.

Vasari, who tells the story of the copying the picture as above related, does not mention what was the distinguishing mark which enabled him to prove that it was the work of Andrea del Sarto. Roscoe, however, in the presence of witnesses, had the picture taken out of its frame, and on the left edge of the panel, which is about three-quarters of an inch thick, the remains of the inscription are still visible:

"ANDREA F. P. . . ."

probably followed by the date of the year, now no longer legible, which places the authenticity of the picture beyond question. The curious thing is, that while the original has lost its freshness and turned rather black, the copy appears (as pronounced by the prelate Bottari,[1] in 1756) to have been painted not more than six months, and, besides its freshness, it is more soft and fleshy than the original. Bottari pronounced it to be "one of the most stupendous pictures I have ever seen."

[1] Bottari, editor and annotator of Vasari's *Lives of the Painters.*

But the terrible strain of parting with his most cherished possessions, and the great anxiety which he had undergone, told greatly on Roscoe's health and spirits. In order to give a change to his thoughts, as well as to render him some pecuniary assistance, Coke proposed that he should take up his abode at Holkham and catalogue the MSS. This he accordingly did, and the complete change of scene, the keenly interesting work on which he was engaged, combined with the unfailing kindness of Coke, and the constant society of the most interesting men of the day, had the desired effect.

The catalogue was intended for publication, and had this intention been carried into effect would, no doubt, as he anticipated, have "surprised the learned world by some very interesting information." After some months' work he relates how he has a good quarto volume already completed. "Lady Anson," he wrote to a friend, "who draws most beautifully, has undertaken to copy some of the very curious specimens of designs in gold and colours in the ancient MSS. I do not believe an artist could be found in the kingdom who could execute them with greater accuracy. The Duke of Gloucester is to be here on the 9th of next month, and as he has been so good as to express a wish to meet me here, I shall not be able to leave Holkham till about the middle of the month."

But his task was not performed so quickly as he had anticipated. It proved most laborious, and the difficulties far beyond what he had first expected, so that, in the broken state of his health, he feared himself unequal to it. Yet he relates how he was repaid by the great

interest of investigating works which were far more curious and valuable than he had at first supposed, and also by the intense pleasure which he found in Coke's society.

"I am sure I need not tell you," he wrote to another friend, "that I find Mr. Coke the same firm and upright supporter of liberty and reform as when I was here last. Uninfluenced by any party, his only wish is to do justice to all and to give every one those rights which he enjoys himself. The pleasure I have had in his society and in that of his family has alleviated my daily labours, and enabled me to accomplish what I certainly should not have undertaken had I been aware of the extent and difficulty."[1]

Perhaps the best account which Roscoe gave of his life at Holkham is contained in a poem preserved there, which, transcribed in his own handwriting, he presented to Coke. It is too long to insert in full, but it relates how—

Where Holkham rears in graceful pride
Her marble halls and crested towers,
And stretches o'er the champaign wide
Her lengthened suite of social bowers;

Where, led by Leicester's forming hand,
To Nature Art her succour gives,
Touches the desert with her wand,
And sculpture breathes and painting lives;
. . . . . .

Sheltered beneath this friendly dome,
Far from the world's tumultuous rage,
I ope the venerated tome,
And read, and glow along the page.

[1] *Life of W. Roscoe*, by his son, Henry Roscoe, Vol. II, p. 264.

Or, wrapt in dreams of ages old,
O'er time Triumphant seem to stand,
Whilst I th' historic volume hold,
Once held by great Alfonso's hand:

Or, sunk in learning's calm retreat,
Midst scenes remote from vulgar eyes,
I trace the weakness of the great,
And mark the follies of the wise.
. . . . . .

But when the studious hours decline,
And tired attention wakes no more,
Then, idly busy, be it mine
Upon the pictured page to pore!

Where rude designs of earlier days
Their bright unchanging hues unfold,
And all th' illumined margins blaze
With azure skies and stars of gold.

Where on the solemn page intrude
Figures grotesque and emblems quaint,
And monsters of infernal brood
Grin scornful at the preaching saint.
. . . . . .

But happier far the moments fly
When, resting from my lengthened toil,
I meet with Coke's benignant eye,
And share his kind approving smile;

Friend of his country and mankind,
To more than titled honours born;
Who looks with independent mind
On all the venal tribes with scorn.

His the firm soul to freedom true,
The open heart, the liberal hand
That from the rock the waters draw,
And bade the bounteous stream expand,

To clothe the plain with brighter green,
The soil with richer harvests bless,
And pour on all the cultured scene
The glow of life and happiness :

Not with scant hand the pittance small
To starving industry to give ;
But grant their general rights to all,
And as he lives, let others live.

And sees, with all a parent's pride,
His healthful village train display'd,
To heal the wounds in nature's side,
By tyrants and by heroes made.

Thus was the library at Holkham at length set in order and restored. It was at the suggestion of the Duke of Sussex that a further improvement in the placing of the books was accomplished. The Duke wrote from Holkham to Dr. Parr :—

"Since my residence at this place I have made frequent visits to Mr. Coke's library, and have finally got him to agree to the one room and the two long passages being entirely dedicated to his library, by which means we shall be enabled to preserve that treasure from *the dilapidations of the curious, as well as from the destruction of the ignorant.* Indeed, it is a most valuable collection, and had our excellent friend been persuaded at his first onset to have appropriated from £500 to £1000 a year towards completing the different compartments of it, he would now have to boast of the finest library in England. The number of first editions is quite extraordinary ; in short, such a collection alone, were not Holkham standing, would be a proof of the chaste, cultivated and luminous mind of the Earl of Leicester. . . . On Monday next I propose leaving my excellent friend."

W. Roscoe

CHAPTER XXV

MISS COKE'S DÉBUT

1813–1819

Ætat 59–65

IN the year 1813 Miss Coke had reached the age of eighteen, when she left the schoolroom and took her position as head of her father's house. Her début was marked by an unexpected incident. On the 31st of March that year there died at Weesenham, Mr. Thomas Sanctuary, an old man of seventy-four, who for many years had been an extensive and successful farmer. In his will he left a legacy of £2000 to Miss Coke, as he stated, "Out of respect and gratitude to his worthy landlord, Mr. Coke, under whom he had acquired his handsome fortune."[1]

Of Miss Coke's childhood there is little record; much of it had been passed in the company of her small nephews and nieces, who were constantly at Holkham. The only glimpses we get of her during those years are afforded by Dr. Parr, who, reading Coke's heart, makes constant mention of the "most accomplished and most amiable child," who, he observed, was Coke's favourite daughter. Whatever messages of compliment, goodwill, or respect Parr's letters conveyed to her sister or to other members of the family, for Miss

[1] *Norfolk Annals*, Vol. I, p. 103.

Coke he shrewdly reserved a distinctive tribute. "For your lovely and justly beloved daughter I must always reserve the more serious language of blessing," he reiterates in most of his letters; while often, in his rôle of Greek Chorus, he echoes Coke's own comments upon the child who was the constant companion of his widowerhood.

> "I love," he says, in 1803, of the little eight-year old daughter "to read the effusions of your affectionate heart when you speak of Eliza. She merits the tenderest regard by all the lovely qualities which adorn her childhood, and I pray God that your life may be lengthened to that period when her improvements in knowledge, her elegance in manners, and her eminence in virtue may prove to an admiring world that she is capable of setting a just estimation upon the bright example of one parent and the ardent affection of the other."

That Parr held no mean opinion of Miss Coke's intellect he also evinced by his messages to her with regard to the books which he desired her to read, and anticipated she would appreciate. "Miss Coke is not a slovenly or a superficial reader," he had observed in 1812; and sometimes—a greater token of appreciation—he appealed to her admiration for his own compositions. When sending to Coke what he terms "a preamble to my parishioners," he remarks complacently, "I rather wish you would let Miss Coke take a little peep at what I said!" while more than once he regrets that Miss Coke does not know Latin, in order that she might the better realise the aptness of some of his allusions. "But," he once suggests hopefully, after sending Coke his learned comments upon the triumph

of Archdeacon Glover,[1] who had come off victorious in an ecclesiastical controversy with a reprehensible Tory, "with a little aid from the Archdeacon, and after a peep into some translation of Virgil, Miss Coke will understand my contrast between the harmless softness of a *Glove* and the destructive massiveness of a Cœstus!" Occasionally he appealed to her judgment in matters political. "There is something so languid in the matter and so undignified in the language of the Prince Regent's speech," he pronounced in 1814, ". . . I think that Miss Coke, as a lady of elegant taste and keen penetration, must think as *I* do of the Regent's speech!"

Parr, in short, took a fatherly interest in the development of Miss Coke's intellect, and when her solitude was enlivened by the companionship of her cousins, the Misses Blackwell, those young ladies also came in for a share of his solicitude.

> "Mrs. Blackwell,"[2] he wrote to Holkham, "must defy the gloomy atmosphere and shortened days of November, because she can pass away the evening in the exercise of her very great skill in Whist, and because every morning she may contrive to gain some accession of valuable knowledge. But if the three young ladies should be in the country, what can they do? The comet is too distant and too diminutive to be distinctly visible; the planets are obscured by dark and impenetrable clouds; there is no entertainment from Parliamentary Debates, and the disputes of Dr. Busby and the poetasters are now become vapid. Were I near those young Ladies some of them should read to me in the evening, and others, under

[1] Chaplain to the Duke of Sussex.

[2] Anne, eldest daughter of James Lennox Dutton, married Samuel Blackwell, Esq., of Ampney Park, Gloucestershire. Died 1821.

my tuition, should have such a course of reading prescribed for the morning, as should exercise their memory and their imagination through the whole drear season of winter ; and, besides, the tremendous events which are now passing would incite all the ingenious young Ladies of your family to direct their curiosity towards the Russian Empire in its huge extent and diversified appearances."

History fails to relate whether the "ingenious young ladies" were not considerably relieved to be spared the course of mental improvement to which the Doctor longed to subject them ; but that he approved the result of an education he had been unable to superintend, he evinced when praising a lady whom he held to be Miss Coke's prototype in excellence—Mrs. Leigh, of Stoneleigh—"who is a most invincible Whig, and a most useful manager, and a very accomplished and well-informed reader, and in all respects of Head and Heart she would acquire the esteem of Miss Coke!"

When Miss Coke came out, she was presented at Court by her sister, Lady Anson, who on the same day presented her own daughter, six months the junior of her youthful aunt. The two girls followed their chaperon in their respective sedan chairs, from which the tops had been removed in order to allow room for their tall head-dresses. On this occasion Parr again echoed Coke's verdict: "You say fine things," he writes, "and I should say much finer of the lovely young Lady!" and although Miss Coke had not the striking beauty of her elder sisters, her picture at this date shows her to have been exceedingly pretty, with a charming, bright, piquante face, fine dark eyes, chestnut hair and a lovely complexion. She was talented and highly

Elizabeth Wilhelmina
youngest daughter of Thomas William Coke
(afterwards Lady Elizabeth Spencer-Stanhope)

educated; she had inherited the family aptitude for art, and also wrote charming verses; while, in after years in Yorkshire, her speeches to the tenants on any public occasion were remarkable for their eloquence.

On coming out, she at once undertook entire control of the establishment at Holkham. "Coke," says Sir Harry Keppel in his autobiography,[1] "had a third daughter, Elizabeth; she likewise was charming, and managed the domestic part of the house." It was a curious position for a young girl, who stepped straight from the schoolroom into being mistress of a house, where she had to receive not only all the noted men of her own country, but representatives of almost every nationality in Europe and of every State in another hemisphere. The unfailing hospitality of Holkham had only increased as the years went by, and Coke's only comment was that "he wished his house were as large again, so that he might accommodate more." "Which proves," said Sir Francis Burdett, "that however ample his stores, God has given him an ampler heart!"[2]

It may be interesting to glance at some of the changes which the society at Holkham had undergone at this date. The days of Fox, Burke, Windham, and Francis, Duke of Bedford, were long past. Sheridan no longer enlivened long days in the covert by his wit and repartee; the Prince Regent came no more, and was mentioned only with unmitigated contempt; but Holkham remained the rallying-point of all the Whig

[1] *A Sailor's Life under Four Sovereigns*, by the Admiral of the Fleet, the Hon. Sir Henry Keppel. Macmillan, 1899.

[2] Speech at the Holkham Sheep-shearing, 1821.

leaders, the centre of European agriculture, the haunt of the foremost representatives of literature, art and sport.

Sir Francis Burdett—"Old Glory" as he was known to his admirers—in his Blue and Buff—always a shade brighter than that worn by other men; Sir Ronald Ferguson; Lords Lynedoch, Erskine and John Russell; the families from Woburn, Quidenham and Althorp; Charles, Duke of Norfolk,[1]—nicknamed after his ancestor, "the Jockey of Norfolk,"—Miss Coke's godfather, with his eccentric dress and habits, and his curiously broad shoulders, said to be more than two feet across; Sir John Sinclair, the agriculturist; Sir James Smith, the botanist; Sir Humphry Davy, the chemist;[2] Thomas Creevey, the amusing gossip and social parasite; the gentle old Bishop of Norwich, and the fiery Dr. Parr, the learned Dr. Maltby,[3] pupil and pride of the latter;—among the workers, Chantrey, Westmacott, Nollekens and Roscoe; among the men from the other hemisphere, Richard Rush and Christopher Hughes; among the royal visitors, Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, the Dukes of Sussex and Gloucester, and the Duke of Clarence when in England;—these, with others too numerous to mention, may be taken as a repre-

[1] The eleventh Duke.

[2] Sir Humphry Davy (1778–1829), Agriculturist and Chemist, succeeded Sir Joseph Banks as President of the Royal Society in 1820.

[3] Edward Maltby, Bishop of Durham; born at Norwich, April 6th, 1770; was educated at Norwich Grammar School under Dr. Parr, and became second only to his master in profundity of scholarship. Of him and Dr. Samuel Butler, Parr wrote to Coke: "Their minds have been very much formed by me, and in the hearing of all Christendom I pronounce them to be men of sense, men of learning, profound scholars, true Christians and most invincible Whigs!"

sentative assembly of the now annual guests at Holkham.

Almost the first person whom Miss Coke was called upon to entertain in her new capacity as mistress of the house, was Lord Moira. He had just been appointed Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief of India, and with Lady Loudoun[1] came to pay his farewell visit to Coke. It was a parting which was singularly painful to both friends. Coke's unvarying affection for this companion of his boyhood may be taken as one of the instances in which his appreciation of an individual was proof against all dislike of the views which that individual might hold. It was still the placemen and the sycophants whom his soul abhorred; but for a man whose heart was honest if his mind perverted, Coke could entertain an affection in which politics held no part. Lord Moira had been, more than once, opposed to the very views which Coke held most at heart. During the American war he had fought with undue ferocity against the cause which Coke championed; later, in his friendship with the Prince Regent after the latter had deserted the Whigs, and by his enmity to the unfortunate Princess of Wales, he again acted at variance with Coke's cherished convictions; yet, as Lord Moira, orator, statesman and governor, or later, as Lord Hastings, the Lord of India, he remained as dear to Coke as the little lad whom he had loved in boyhood, or the slim youth who had climbed Mount Vesuvius so eagerly in the exciting days of the grand tour.

[1] The Earl of Moira married, in 1804, Flora Muir-Campbell, Countess of Loudoun in her own right.

During that last visit to Holkham, Coke arranged to buy from him a very fine Claude of which he was possessed; but as Coke characteristically would insist on giving too much for the picture, and Lord Moira as characteristically would insist on receiving too little, it finally was decided that the matter must be settled by an outside opinion. On April 20th Lord Moira left England on board the *Stirling Castle*, and his last thought as he quitted his native shores was for his old friend.

Lord Moira to T. W. Coke.

"St. Helens, Tuesday Morning,
April 20th, 1813.

"My dear Friend,

"The wind has come fair; we are under sail, and I take the last moment for bidding you farewell. I am glad I did not see you again. My heart was very full when we parted; though it was necessary that I should brave the feeling.

"I did not forget the Claude. Dawson has my instructions to send it to West in Newman Street, and I have informed West that you are to have it at whatever price he and Segnier[1] shall jointly think it worth.

"God bless you. Lady Loudoun and the children are not only well but perfectly reconciled to the ship.

"Ever faithfully yours,
"Moira."

Scarcely had Lord Moira left Holkham, when the man with whom he had recently been at variance in the political world, Lord Grey,[2] succeeded him as Coke's

[1] A picture dealer in London.

[2] Charles succeeded his father as second Earl Grey in 1807 (1764-1845).

guest. On April 23rd Lord Grey wrote from Holkham an interesting description to Lady Grey of his impression of the house at that date :—

> "I am delighted with this place. I had no idea of the magnificence of the house. It is really the best I know, and contains treasures of all sorts—pictures, books, drawings, etc., and the fittings up in the best style of old magnificence. The extent of the grounds and the excellent management of the farm and plantations exceed anything that I could have imagined, even from the very favourable account I have heard of them. To speak in adequate terms of Mr. Coke's merit in all he has done here (for he has not only created a magnificent place in what was absolutely a barren waste, but set an example to the country which has been of more real benefit than all that was ever done by any statesman that ever existed) is quite impossible. I can conceive nothing equal to the gratification with which he must look round upon the fine woods of his own planting, at the most perfect cultivation where there was nothing but a barren sand occupied by rabbits, and at a peasantry increasing in opulence and *absolutely adoring him* as their Landlord and benefactor. He has not planted less than 1500 acres, and that in the most judicious way both for ornament and profit, and thriving under as good a system of management as I believe can be practised. Among the perfections of the place I had forgotten to enumerate the kitchen garden, which is far the best I ever saw, upon a very large scale, with all kinds of forcing houses, etc., and in the best order. In short, I have been delighted with what I have seen."

Apart from the constant visitors who came from a distance, the friends whom Miss Coke saw the most often, owing to their neighbourhood in the county, were the Keppels. "Similar politics, somewhat radical, had

years ago brought the families of Coke and Keppel together," says Sir Harry Keppel in his autobiography; and George, Lord Albemarle, remarks how the Keppels and Cokes lived like one family. The Keppels were undoubtedly much more radical than the Cokes; but as Coke himself remarked: "There may be shades of difference in political opinion between us, but we come to the same point in the end."[1] Lord Albemarle's three daughters—Sophia, Anne and Mary—were constantly at Holkham even as children, and learnt to look upon Miss Coke as an elder sister. Anne was Coke's godchild.

Harry Keppel, their brother, afterwards Admiral Keppel, also stayed at Holkham for a considerable time, in order to be coached by a tutor from Wells for the Royal Naval College. He relates how, one day after breakfast, Coke told him to join him in his study, and directed him to sit in a certain chair. After he had sat there for some minutes in a considerable perturbation, Coke, who was writing at his desk, called to him, and said: "Now, I will tell you why I put you in that chair; young Nelson sat there on an occasion when he came to make his declaration for half-pay as Commander." Admiral Keppel afterwards proved no unworthy successor to the previous famous occupant of the chair.

Another naval hero who frequently visited Holkham was Sir William Hoste. His father, the Rev. Dixon Hoste, a younger branch of the family who for generations had been in possession of Sandringham, was forced, owing to financial difficulties, to sell his own

[1] *Norwich Courier*, February 7th, 1819.

property, Ingoldsthorpe Hall, also in Norfolk. Coke thereupon presented him with the living of Tittleshall, and with a residence at the old hunting seat of Godwick Hall. William Hoste, the second son of this Mr. Dixon Hoste, was introduced by Coke to Nelson, and first went to sea under the latter in 1783. Nelson, although much the senior of his young Norfolk neighbour, soon learnt to look upon the youthful lieutenant as a favourite and a friend, while Lady Hamilton always spoke of him as "dear little Captain Hoste." In a letter when William Hoste was only seventeen, Nelson prophesied that he would be an honour to Norfolk and to England; a prophecy which was fulfilled, for in the battle of the Nile William Hoste distinguished himself and obtained a brilliant victory over the French and Italian fleets on March 13th, 1811, off the Island of Lissa. Years afterwards, in a naval engagement when the enemy's ships were double his own in number, he telegraphed the signal—"Remember Nelson." He was staying at Holkham in 1814 when he was created a baronet for his gallant services.

His sister, Jane Hoste, was one of Miss Coke's greatest friends. She was clever, amusing and far above the average both in ability and education. In fact, the Hostes were all gifted with brains and courage. Captain Hoste,[1] brother of Sir William, and another constant guest at Holkham, was also distinguished for his bravery. At the age of thirteen he entered the navy as a volunteer on board the *Amphion*, commanded by his brother, and the latter used to relate the follow-

[1] Thomas Edward, fifth son of the Rev. Dixon Hoste, by his wife Margaret, daughter of Henry Stanforth, of Salhouse.

ing story about him. One day, when the boats were leaving the ship on active service, William Hoste spied his small brother endeavouring to get into one of them. Telling the precocious youth he was "too young for that sort of work," the elder brother promptly ordered the younger back to the ship, and little Hoste returned to the quarter-deck looking extremely crestfallen. But after the boats were well away from the ship, the lieutenant in command felt something move under his legs, when to his surprise he found it was the small volunteer who had got himself unobserved through one of the port-holes, and, determined to see active service without further delay, had hidden himself stealthily under the stern sheets till it should be too late to put him ashore.

The most frequent visitor at Holkham, however, although he came more as a son of the house than a guest, was William, Coke's nephew and heir. He was in some ways as remarkable a personality as his uncle was in others. Tall and slight, with a small, finely-shaped head, covered with chestnut curls, a very fair, clear complexion, an aquiline nose and the eye of a hawk, he was as reckless and uncontrolled in character as he was handsome in appearance. Many were the stories current of his exploits and his dare-devil pluck. He had a very violent temper, and acted according to his mood, without caring what interpretation the world might put upon his conduct.

At Eton he won renown for himself when poaching in Windsor Park as his uncle had done before him. Knowing him to be a determined aggressor, the keepers formed a special plan to entrap him ; but, in

spite of gamekeepers by day and watchers by night, they failed in their endeavour, until one day when they not only spied him in the act of securing a hare, but pursued him with his booty to the very river's brink. William, however, thrust the hare into his mouth, and plunging into the stream, swam safely with it to the other side, to the extreme mortification of his pursuers, and to the corresponding joy of his schoolfellows, who had a merry supper on the proceeds of his exploit.[1]

At Hatton, as has before been mentioned, William braved the ire of the redoubtable Dr. Parr in a manner which earned for him the admiration and the awe of his contemporaries. A favourite diversion of his was to fill the grey bob-wig of the doctor with pepper before school hours and to wait for the resonant sneezing which followed. Occasionally, morsels of toasted cheese were substituted as a variety, strong with an odour the mysterious proximity of which was a matter of profound perplexity to the Doctor, who, as his letters testify, had an intense dislike to the smell or the taste of cheese. Another, and a more dangerous trick, was to put a pinch of gunpowder amongst the tobacco in the very long meerschaum pipe which Parr was in the habit of smoking, and to await the miniature explosion when the Doctor applied a match, and which was invariably deadened by a more impressive explosion of wrath on the part of the victim. On one occasion, when the Doctor had offended him, William quietly turned the key of the bath-room door while Parr was performing his ablutions, and when the in-

[1] Whyte Melville erroneously attributes this exploit to his uncle, T. W. Coke. A somewhat similar story is told of Sir Thomas Turton.

dignant Doctor was exhausted with steam and fury, William unlocked the door again and calmly remarked through the chink—"Par-boiled!"

William Coke had intended to go into the army, but owing to his position as heir of Holkham it was considered necessary that he should abandon this intention. As was inevitable, a report got abroad that a marriage was arranged between himself and Miss Coke. Upon hearing this, Miss Coke, knowing with whom she had to deal, went straight to him and said frankly: "William, I hear that people are saying that I am going to marry you; I shall be much obliged if you will contradict the report." This at once prevented any awkwardness, and they remained the greatest friends.

Although a perfect sportsman, William was not a first-class shot. He was not very accurate in his shooting, but was so remarkably quick that he invariably killed more game wherever he went than did any one else. The only marvel was that he escaped without some serious catastrophe. His reckless impatience, and the speed with which he went to work, made him a dangerous companion. Once, when his gun missed fire, he discharged the second barrel in the air, smashed his gun across his knee and tossed the broken fragments over the hedge. "You would, would you?" he shouted after the mangled pieces.

On one occasion, however, he was beaten by Lord Kennedy, who was foremost among the best shots of his day. In 1823 William had a celebrated bet with Lord Kennedy for £200 a side. The terms were that Lord Kennedy was to shoot partridges for two days in

Scotland against William, who was to shoot two days at Holkham. This time William Coke won. "William's bet with Lord Kennedy," wrote Coke to Lord Suffield, "terminated yesterday as under—

> "On the 24th September he had 386 shots, out of which he bagged 173 birds; and on the 4th October he had 328 shots, out of which he killed 175, so that in two days he killed 348 and shot 714 times."

Lord Kennedy, however, concluding that birds might be more plentiful at Holkham than in Scotland, proposed that a second match should come off at Holkham the following year, Mr. Coke, senior, to name the two beats. A day was to intervene between the first and second day's shooting, to allow the partridges to settle, when the shooters were to exchange beats. Both sportsmen were to shoot when they liked, load their guns, hunt the dogs and pick up all the birds killed with the aid of the attendants. The first day Lord Kennedy was about fourteen brace behind his opponent, his dogs having been completely bewildered by the enormous number of partridges. On his way home, however, he was joined by Mr. Denny, a fine old farmer, who told him that he was one of Mr. Coke's principal tenants, but, all the same, he did not like to see a "foreigner" defeated by ignorance of the country, and as his farm was the beat chosen for the next day, he would not only tell Lord Kennedy what plan to pursue in shooting over it, but he would lend him a couple of old setters who had only two eyes between them, and who would potter round inoffensively within fifteen to twenty yards, and help to find the dead birds. "You must ride the stubble all round," he said, "and

drive the birds into it. Place your two men one on each side, and beat the field in small circles. If you go straight through it, the birds will run to the end, and will then rise in a great pack; but by making small circles you will cut them off and get shots." Lord Kennedy followed the advice of this traitor in the camp, and, to his triumph, won the bet by nine brace ahead of his opponent.

William had another famous match with Captain Horatio Ross in 1825, when he won with ninety brace to his credit. In this match each sportsman loaded his own gun, picked up his own birds, and had no beaters but his own dog—a general trial of skill.

William Coke was the first man who went in earnest deer-stalking through the Highlands. He had a pair of corduroy breeches of which it was jocularly said that he never took them off for a fortnight, while, crawling on his hands and knees, he emulated Nebuchadnezzar.

He was a magnificent rider, and used to ride his famous horse "Advance," whom no one else could manage, with a great label, "HE KICKS," pinned on to his shoulders—a very necessary precaution, as the horse was most unsafe in a crowd. There was a picture of him upon "Advance" in the old prints of "Nimrod," and many adventures of the famous steed and his rider were commemorated in verses of the period, especially a memorable run with Lord Southampton's hounds, when "Advance" plunged headlong with his rider into a stream, and both were nearly drowned.[1]

[1] A satire entitled "Melton in 1830: a Day with Lord Southampton's Hounds," which appeared in 1837 in the *New Sporting Magazine* from the

Another matter in which he gained a temporary and amusing notoriety was as a wearer of a billycock (Billy Coke) hat. He realised the need of a hat which would keep on his head in wind and not be damaged by rain, and being indifferent as to whether his appearance was unlike that of other people, he decided that a hat said to have been originally designed by William Bowler, a hatter in the Borough, would answer his requirements. He therefore ordered Lock, in St. James's Street, to make him one after this pattern, and the fashion thus started was afterwards universally adopted.[1]

William had a valet called Fox, a tall, powerful man, who went everywhere with his master, and was a great favourite with him. On one occasion, however, Fox gave offence, and when reprimanded, excused himself with some freedom of speech. William Coke made no comment at the time, but later in the day called Fox into his room. Having promptly locked the door behind the astonished servant, he threw the key out of the window and drew off his coat. "We will settle this as man to man!" he said; and in a hand-to-hand fight he thrashed Fox within an inch of his life.

When the old Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz

pen of an anonymous writer, possibly Bernal Osborne or Lord Gardiner:

"Now Billy Coke, who never lost a chance,
Down the Hill's side comes rattling on Advance;
And though he saw the Willows, still he took
His line, and crammed him straight at Langton Brook;
But vain the effort, gazing on the flood,
Narcissus like, upon the bank he stood.
Then struggling headlong, fell; and, see, he's done!
He washed his master, but he lost the run."

[1] The origin of billycock hats has been erroneously attributed to T. W. Coke, and also to other sources, but the above is the only correct account.

was staying at Holkham, he boasted one evening at dinner that no man had ever dared to shoot at him, and that if any one had ever attempted such a thing he would have shot the man dead on the spot. The next day at the covert the Grand Duke suddenly felt a shower of shot peppering his legs, and, turning round in a fury to find whence it proceeded, saw William Coke with a gun levelled in his direction. "I've got another muzzle ready," said William coolly. "*Will you shoot?*"

William's less aggressive feats with the gun are occasionally recorded in the Holkham game books. In 1814 he killed, a double shot, at wild geese, and some years later he shot a hare three feet above the ground. But others appear to have rivalled him. Mr. Lambart, in 1814, killed a hare and a pheasant at one shot; Mr. Fortescue, on another occasion, killed a lark and a partridge, both in the air, at one shot; and on one remarkable 11th of November, 1822, it is recorded how Coke killed a hare and a rabbit at one shot, Lord Spencer a hare and a pheasant at one shot, and Lord Althorp shot at a hare and killed a rabbit; while all these feats were outdistanced by Mr. Newcome, who, at one shot, killed a rabbit and cock and hen pheasants. The game books, it may be mentioned, were not always kept with the solemnity which is accorded to them in modern times. In some of the old books—unfortunately lost—Fox and Sheridan are said to have written witty jests and verses; constantly, facetious entries occur; while any unusual incident is recorded, as, for instance, how one day Lord John Russell "shot a pheasant off the black mare's back"; or how the

shooters, at the end of November, found a blackbird's nest with one egg in it *newly laid*.

Miss Coke used to keep a little memorandum of the different house-parties at Holkham, and in 1814 she mentions that the Duke of Norfolk was staying there, which must have been one of the last visits he paid to Coke, for he died in 1815. The greatest gourmand of his age, the Duke was a noted member of the Beaf Steak Club, where he was always ceremoniously ushered to a chair of state, some steps above the table, and invested with an orange-coloured ribbon to which a small gridiron was attached. Two or three steaks vanished like magic when placed before him, and when it was considered an impossibility that his gastronomic powers could survive a greater strain, he would be seen bravely rubbing his plate with shalot for the reception of yet another steak. Nor was his capacity for drinking less remarkable, as was testified by Foote's famous gibe on being consulted by the Duke respecting what absolutely new character his Grace could go in to a masquerade: "*Go sober!*" quoth Foote.

Yet to the last year of his life the Duke's conversation was cultured, pithy and full of a cleverness which even the strongest port failed to eliminate. In one respect only he became a somewhat trying guest, in that he suffered from drowsiness, and seldom failed to make all aware of his condition by the resounding snores to which he unconsciously gave vent. This was the cause of an amusing incident in the Lords about this date. Coke, who never ceased to labour for the cultivation of all waste land, had presented a petition to Parliament for the enclosure

of certain heath land and commons in the parish of Great Snoring in Norfolk. The bill passed the Commons and was taken up by Lord Eldon to the House of Lords. But at the precise moment at which it was to be presented, the Duke of Norfolk was unconsciously, but seriously, interrupting the business of the House by the resonance of his noisy slumbers. When Lord Eldon, with his keen sense of humour, announced loudly and pointedly that the bill related to *Great Snoring in Norfolk*, the entire House broke into a shout of merriment which effectually roused the old Duke, who soon joined heartily in the laugh at his own expense.[1]

Amongst other names which Miss Coke mentions are those of the two Americans, Richard Rush and Christopher Hughes, who while in England were constantly guests of Coke. Rush, who was American Minister at the Court of St. James's for nine years, from 1816 to 1825, was a very distinguished man, a considerable author, and a noted politician. On first coming to England he expressed himself most curious to see Coke, for, as he relates, "his name is well known in my country; his good deeds go before him, and his fame is spread in all civilised nations." Following the example of his compatriots, he sent many of his friends to Holkham, and on more than one occasion makes quaint apologies to Coke for his protégé being "a gentleman of plain and modest outside." Christopher Hughes was equally, if not more celebrated, and was said to be the "best-known man in the world from

[1] *Life of Lord Chancellor Eldon*, by Horace Twiss (second edition, 1844), Vol. II, p. 606.

New York to Kamschatka. In February, 1814, he was commissioned Secretary to the United States Legation in London, and soon afterwards paid his first visit to Holkham, which he never failed to repeat whenever he was in England. He represented the United States longer than any other Minister at several European Courts, and was said to have been remarkable for "saying more wise things, strange things, droll things, than ever tongue uttered or mind conceived."[1] His letters to Coke bear out this character, and are extremely lengthy, even for correspondence of that date, the sheets being occasionally tied together with yellow ribbon. Moreover, not content with writing when absent, he also wrote letters to Coke when staying at Holkham, addressing these to *T. W. Coke, Esqre., Chez lui.* "Your Battues and your batteries (both of Field and Kitchen) keep you so constantly on the Hoof," he complains, "that I may never get a short talk, much less a good Indian 'Long Talk' with you! So I must draw upon my ancestor whose name was Martimus Scrib!"

Another visitor of whom Miss Coke makes frequent mention is Lord Erskine; who was the life and soul of the party. In the evening he was fond of reciting humorous verses of his own composition, and Burdett, in a speech at one of the Sheep-shearings, remarked how Lord Erskine, on account of his juvenility, reminded him of "an ancient gem, which represented the figure of Youth peeping through the mask of Age." Lord Erskine, moreover, had one great weakness which was a never-failing source of amusement to

[1] *National Cyclopædia of American Biography,* Vol. VII, p. 165.

his friends: being wholly ignorant on the subject of farming, he was keenly anxious to appear the reverse. Whenever matters agricultural were mentioned, he exhibited the greatest enthusiasm, and his speeches at the Sheep-shearings afforded infinite amusement from the serious manner in which he attacked a subject of which he was completely ignorant. One episode, moreover, Coke was mischievously fond of recalling to his memory. One day they were driving together, when they came to a very fine field of barley. Lord Erskine threw up his hands with the rapt admiration of a profound agriculturist, and exclaimed: "Good God, Coke, what *magnificent lavender!*"

On one point only Lord Erskine scored as an agriculturist. He used to relate, in triumph, how when he first went to live at Hampstead, his gardener bought a chestnut tree at a nursery-gardener's for sixpence, and it afterwards yielded him £30 a year.

Lord Erskine was fond of saying that he "had studied Coke at Westminster and Coke at Holkham. That Coke the agriculturist was as great a man in his line as Coke the lawyer in his; wheat from the farms of the former being as easily distinguished from other corn, as the doctrines of law in the pages of Coke the lawyer from all other legal compositions."[1] He was proud of boasting that he remembered Holkham as "a heath, and the beautiful fields surrounding it as a barren waste"; while for Coke himself he professed an admiration which increased with the length of their friendship. "To the kindness and partiality of my friend I have no claim but one," he said in one of his

[1] *Correspondence of Sir J. Sinclair*, Vol. I, p. 126.

speeches; "that is long and intimate acquaintance, during which if I had flagrantly forfeited his good opinion I could not have stood here—nay, I should have been unworthy of standing anywhere—for those who lose the esteem of the good, neither deserve nor can enjoy their countenance in society."[1]

Lord Erskine and Dr. Parr met at Holkham, and were mutually pleased with each other. They used to walk up and down the terrace paying each other the most fulsome compliments. Parr, who considered that the highest honour he could pay any man was to compose that man's epitaph, was heard one day gravely informing Lord Erskine that he had "every intention of writing his lordship's epitaph"; Lord Erskine as gravely replied that "Such an honour would make death a pleasure!"

Although vain by nature, Lord Erskine was also refreshingly spontaneous and impulsive. On one occasion, James Perry, of the *Morning Chronicle*, who visited Holkham with Dr. Rigby in 1818, was confined in Newgate for a libel, where he amused himself in a sufficiently melancholy manner by playing with the Highland broadsword upon the leads in order to get exercise. Suddenly, one evening, the door of his prison opened, and to his utter astonishment there entered upon his solitude Coke and Lord Erskine, followed by an hilarious company and ample refreshments. It appears that they had all been dining at the British Coffee House, when some one had proposed James Perry's health, whereupon Lord Erskine in-

[1] *A Report of the Transactions at the Holkham Sheep-shearing, 1821*, by R. N. Bacon, pp. 23–4.

sisted that they should drink James Perry's health in James Perry's presence, and accordingly the whole of the party adjourned to finish their festive evening in the gloomy prison.[1]

Miss Coke mentions how, one night, there had been a terrible thunderstorm at Holkham which disturbed most of the guests. At breakfast she inquired from Lord Erskine whether his slumbers had been broken? "Oh no!" he replied cheerfully; "I must have been sleeping on the other side of the house!"

Later in life, Lord Erskine formed a connection with a lady whom he married at Gretna Green in 1821. One of the sons of this connection, Alfred, proved wild, and a considerable trouble to his so-called relations. Coke was told the following curious story with regard to him.

It appears that Alfred, after various escapades, had left England. His elder brother, Erskine, was walking, one morning, to have breakfast with Thomas Erskine, the judge, in Cumberland Terrace, Regent's Park. The day was disagreeable, the hour was early, and at that date the neighbourhood of the Regent's Park was far more solitary than it is at present. Foot passengers were extremely rare, and Erskine was therefore surprised to hear a man following him along the pavement,—a man whose steps kept in strange unison with his own. The steps followed him for a considerable distance, coming gradually nearer, till at last, feeling nervous at their proximity and persistency, he looked round;—then stood transfixed with astonishment, on seeing close behind him his brother Alfred, whom he had supposed

[1] *Reminiscences,* by Henry Angelo (1830), Vol. II, p. 315.

to be with his regiment abroad. Jumping at once to the conclusion that his brother was in some serious scrape, Erskine exclaimed angrily—"Good gracious, Alfred—whatever has brought you back to England? How did you get leave?" His brother, who he saw was looking very ill and pale, appeared to be struggling to answer; then, to Erskine's horror, the vision slowly vanished, and he found himself alone.

Completely unnerved, he went on his way, and related what had happened to the entire family at breakfast.

Afterwards, news came from abroad that Alfred had been killed in a duel at the exact hour when the apparition appeared.

The hero of this episode, however, never visited Holkham. Lord Erskine invariably came alone, and remained for a considerable time. On one occasion when Sir James Smith and his brother, Martin, had been invited to Holkham, Coke was called to town unexpectedly on parliamentary business, and his guests arrived to find, instead of their host, Lord Erskine installed with a party of young ladies, seven of Miss Coke's cousins being on a visit to her. Sir James Smith could only compare Lord Erskine and the merry party to the denizens of an enchanted castle who held him spellbound. "You may depend upon finding us here if you stay the whole season in town," he wrote to Coke. "There are syrens warbling around us that make us forget time, and place, and everything else!"

Lady Smith does not appear to have accompanied her husband on this occasion; but she often did so. She was a peculiarly fascinating woman. "He who could see and hear Lady Smith without being enchanted,"

wrote Roscoe to Coke, "has a heart not worth a brass farthing!" She survived her husband many years, living until 1877, when she had attained the age of 104. Dame Pleasance Smith was a well-known figure in Norwich, where she resided during the latter years of her life, retaining till the last her remarkable vigour of mind and body, and taking long walks daily till within a short time of her death.

A guest who could boast neither the exuberant spirits of Lord Erskine nor the contented temperament of Sir James, was Adair the diplomatist. A melancholy, long-visaged man, he was known both at Holkham and at Quidenham as the "Knight of the Woeful Countenance." His father was staff-surgeon to George III, and married Lady Caroline Keppel, whose sister Elizabeth, Marchioness of Tavistock, was mother of the Duke of Bedford. The three cousins, the Duke of Bedford, Lord Albemarle and Adair, all wore their hair short without either powder or pigtail, while this fashion was still supposed to indicate Republican principles and was considered both ugly and eccentric. Coke, personally, disliked it, and refused to adopt it long after it had become almost universal. Adair, however, in spite of his ability as a diplomatist, had a curious aptitude for making himself ridiculous, and became celebrated as the chief butt of Canning's satire; although from this Coke himself does not appear to have been immune:—"Canning calling Coke of Norfolk a 'Landed Grandee' was damned good!" pronounced Creevey.

At a time when the relations of England and Russia were strained, Fox said to Adair, who was going on the Continent: "Well, if you are determined to go, send

Lady Smith in fancy dress,
as a Fortune-teller

us all the news!" Adair pointed out that his letters would be opened, on which Fox told him to employ a cypher used by himself and General Burgoyne during the American war; and, in order to make this appear more puzzling, to put some of the figures in red ink.

In consequence of this, Burke afterwards accused Fox of having sent Adair on a secret mission without the knowledge of his party or of the Ministers, and with the secret object of thwarting another mission which was sent to St. Petersburg at that time. Thirty years afterwards this charge was revived by Bishop Tomline, but on Adair calling for proofs of the charge, the latter was unable to produce any.

Adair was afterwards employed by both Grey and Canning on missions of great importance, one of these, to which we shall have occasion to refer later, being a special mission to Brussels in order to settle the terms of separation with Holland, and on behalf of England to acknowledge King Leopold.

Leopold of Saxe-Coburg was a constant visitor at Holkham till the time of his marriage, and after the death of Princess Charlotte; but most of the correspondence from him which has been preserved there dates subsequent to his being King of the Belgians. His manner was somewhat stiff and heavy; he spoke broken English, but wrote it fairly correctly, in a neat copper-plate hand. Each letter to Coke commences with "My dear Sir!" written with great precision, at the top and in the exact centre of a large sheet of paper, followed by a note of exclamation. Only once does he approach a jest—

"My dear Sir!—[he exclaims]

"Permit me to offer You once more my best and sincerest thanks for Your kindness to me, during my long and most agreeable *Séjour* at Holkham. I trust You are well, and that the doctoring of Lady Anson, as well as the Brandy and Water System has counteracted all the mischief done by certain Oysters?"—

and one feels that he has made a praiseworthy attempt at being facetious. In short, his letters are invariably uninteresting, but they all express a sentimental affection for Holkham—"Your hospitable house where I spent so many happy days"; and, after he became King, they are full of his longing to find himself there again.

"I do assure you," he wrote, "that I do not make use of the language of Courts, when I tell You that Your kind reception when I last visited You has not been forgotten, and that there is not a family in England I feel a greater satisfaction in visiting again, than Yours, my dear Sir!"

Naturally, on account of his great intimacy at Holkham, Leopold's marriage with Princess Charlotte was received favourably there, more especially as the Princess herself was known to be friendly to the Whigs, and an ardent Foxite. Lady de Clifford, Lady Albemarle's mother, had been governess to the Princess, and this had led to much comment, both at Holkham and at Quidenham, respecting the character of the Princess and the manner in which the Regent behaved to his daughter and to Lady de Clifford. Particularly with regard to the circumstances under which the latter had resigned her appointment to the Princess, much indignation was felt and expressed.

George, Lord Albemarle, relates how—"Lady De Clifford, having first extracted a promise of secrecy from the Regent, proceeded, in the discharge of her duty, to make a statement to him respecting the conduct of a person known to H.R.H. With characteristic levity he betrayed her to the person complained of. She thereupon threw up her appointment. The Prince requested her to state her reasons for quitting his service in so abrupt a manner. 'Because,' was the reply, 'your Royal Highness has taught me the distinction between the word of honour of a Prince and a gentleman.'"[1]

Lord Albemarle also relates how the Prince subsequently treated Lady de Clifford with marked rudeness. But he does not tell the full extent to which His Royal Highness carried his petty spite. On the last occasion when Lady de Clifford appeared at Court, she was advancing to make her curtsey to Queen Charlotte, when the Regent, with petty malice, deliberately set his foot upon her dress, thus effectually wrecking at once the obeisance and the garment. He murmured, of necessity, some half-hearted words of apology, but the old lady's Irish blood was up, and she closed his speech by exclaiming bluntly: "Sir, you did it a-puppus!"

Of the unfortunate Princess of Wales, however, Lady de Clifford entertained no very favourable opinion. The royal lady's conduct at all times was eccentric to the verge of lunacy. On one of the first occasions when Lady de Clifford went with the Princess

[1] *Fifty Years of my Life*, by George Thomas, Earl of Albemarle, Vol. I, p. 335.

Charlotte to pay a visit permitted by the Regent, they found the Princess of Wales seated cross-legged upon the floor munching hot potatoes, for which she had a great partiality, nor did she attempt to assume a more dignified posture upon the entrance of her visitors, whom she cordially invited to partake of her repast, as though it were the most natural thing in the world to find her thus engaged.

In November, 1817, Lord and Lady Albemarle arrived to stay at Holkham, where a large party was assembled. Following upon their arrival, to the consternation of everybody, came the news of the death of Princess Charlotte in her confinement.

Lady Albemarle was at this time expecting her eleventh child; a very warm friendship had subsisted between herself and the Princess, and the shock to her on hearing of the death of her friend under such circumstances was so great that it seriously affected her health. Still she struggled not to give way, and about a week after the Princess's death she went for a long drive in a high phaeton, of which she was very fond, and in which she drove two horses—one, given to her by the Duke of Sussex which she called "Prince," the other given to her by her husband, which she called "Farmer." The high-spirited animals pulled in a manner which, in the weak state of her health, greatly fatigued her; she came home very knocked up, was taken dangerously ill with a premature confinement, and died after suffering for seventeen hours.[1]

[1] In Vol. II, p. 113, of the *Jerningham Papers,* Lady Bedingfield relates: "Lady de Clifford's eldest daughter, Lady Albemarle, who was at Holkham, was so shocked at hearing the account of the Princess

The body was afterwards removed to Quidenham for burial, and a large number of the tenants on Lord Albemarle's estate rode over to meet it and joined the procession as it left Holkham; all of which had been foreseen in a dream by Lady Andover some weeks previously, and related by her to Miss Coke.

As a result of their mother's death and the marriage of their sister Sophia, in 1719, to Sir James Macdonald, Lady Anne and Lady Mary Keppel were more constantly at Holkham; and whenever his parliamentary duties called their father to London, they used to be placed under the care of Miss Coke, who looked upon herself in the light of chaperon to the younger girls, Lady Anne, the elder of the two, being her junior by nine years.

One result of the great intimacy between the two families was that Lord Bury, Lord Albemarle's eldest son, fell deeply in love with Miss Coke, an affection which she reciprocated; but in spite of Coke's great friendship for Lord Albemarle, he refused his consent to the marriage. His sole objection to it, he told her, was: "He is not worthy of you!" After the attachment had continued for many years, however, having no more valid excuse to offer, he reluctantly withdrew this refusal, only to discover, to his great relief, that Lord Bury had at last transferred his affection else-

Charlotte, that, being also pregnant, she was immediately taken ill, miscarried, and died a few hours afterwards." Princess Charlotte, however, died November 6th, and Lady Albemarle did not die till November 13th. It was, perhaps, a curious coincidence that ten years later, in 1827, Prince Leopold wrote to Coke to plan his arrival at Holkham on November 6th, the anniversary of the death of Princess Charlotte.

where. The event proved the justice of Coke's instinctive horror of the marriage: Lord Bury afterwards went out of his mind, and was for many years in an asylum.

One of the most peculiar guests who for many years came to Holkham was Sir John Sebright, who had had the ploughing competition with Coke in 1801, and who often presided as one of the judges at the Sheep-shearings. In appearance he was extremely uncouth, although he possessed many excellent qualities, and Miss Berry, who professed herself "much amused and entertained" by him, pronounced him "a quite singular man of powerful understanding";[1] but his eccentricity increased rather than diminished as the years went by. His daughters, though clever, were as little gifted with personal charm as himself. "Miss Sebright," we are told, "though mathematical, mechanical and geological, has no great personal attractions, and some considerable singularities."[2] In spite of this, Sir John learnt to dance and play the fiddle on purpose that he might teach his daughters to dance; and after they were grown up he used to give them lessons in deportment and the minuet, which lessons, from the ungainly gestures of both the teacher and the pupils, were said to be a sight that few could witness with solemnity.

Miss Sebright and her sisters, however, seldom came to Holkham; when visiting there Sir John more often brought with him a favourite dog, which was remarkably clever at learning tricks, and which he used to take infinite pains to teach. Lord Erskine, who also pos-

[1] *Berry Journals and Corres.* (1865), Vol. II, p. 487.
[2] *The Pope of Holland House*, by Lady Seymour (1906), p. 196.

sessed a dog, the life of which he had saved from some street boys and of the sagacity of which he boasted, declared that his dog was the cleverer of the two. Accordingly a wager was laid as to which animal, in the course of a twelvemonth, could be taught to do the most extraordinary trick. At the end of a year the trial took place at Holkham. Lord Erskine's dog cleverly took a roasted oyster out of the fire without injuring itself, but Sir John's dog actually carried a glass of wine, without spilling a drop, to any gentleman in the room who was pointed out to him.

Of two of Coke's greatest friends, Lord Lynedoch and Sir Ronald Ferguson, little record, and scarcely any correspondence, has survived at Holkham; but they were frequent visitors there. Lord Holland, on the contrary, who was a fairly active correspondent, does not appear to have visited Coke, despite the fact that all his relations did so. Creevey professes to give the explanation of this. He relates how, when talking to Coke: "I remarked that I had never heard of Lord Holland being at Holkham, and yet, of course, he must have been. 'No,' said he; 'his uncle Charles used to live here, and I have often asked Lord Holland, but, of course, he would not come without Lady Holland,[1] and of course it is out of the question my asking her. I dine at Lord Holland's now and then. When I do so I am very attentive, as I ought to be, to Lady Holland, and there is no kind of flattery she does

[1] Elizabeth Vassall (1770–1845), the daughter of a wealthy Jamaica planter, married in 1786 Sir Godfrey Webster, but the marriage was dissolved in 1797 in consequence of her elopement with Lord Holland, who then married her. She was distinguished for beauty, wit and autocratic ways.

not apply to me; but it won't do. She is not a woman I approve of at all. I am only surprised that so many people have been bullied by her into letting her into their houses. For myself, I have always made up my mind that she should never enter mine.' Bravo! King Tom. What a charming subject to plague her with the first time she gives me any offence. . . . Certain it is that this Holkham is by far the greatest curiosity in England."[1]

Despite this, Lady Holland appears to have entertained a genuine respect for the man who showed himself proof against her wiles. There is a story that, at a dinner where she was present, some one was discussing Coke of Norfolk, and remarked that he was a man who would share his last crust with a friend. "That he wouldn't"! contradicted Lady Holland in her authoritative manner. "He'd give his friend the *crust entire* and go without himself!"

Miss Coke, in her notebook, tells how the long evenings at Holkham were spent after the early dinner. There was a great fashion for games of all sorts: charades were popular, and a very favourite game was that each guest, in turn, should endeavour to tell the most marvellous, the most witty, or the most preposterous story, the winner receiving a prize; and these stories thus related by the most noted men of the day would have been well worth recording. Card games, of course, took place every night, usually vingt-et-un and whist, of which latter Coke was said to be one of the best players in the kingdom, although, true to his early determination, he never gambled, in spite of this resolution being thought very peculiar. Songs, senti-

[1] *The Creevey Papers*, Vol. II, p. 333.

mental, Bacchanalian or comic always occupied part of the evening. The Duke of Sussex was a great performer. He was particularly fond of songs with choruses, and as he was gifted with a stentorian voice, he drowned the voice of every person who attempted to sing with him. At cards he used to name all whom he chose to play with him; and the ladies were then allowed to be without gloves, which was never the case at meals.

It is, perhaps, strange that of the Duke of Gloucester and Prince Leopold no anecdotes are preserved; but although the former usually stayed at Holkham twice a year, only one saying of his is on record—his remark to Richard Rush how "he considered that Sir Benjamin Hobhouse's description of the Holkham estate could not be bettered—namely, that 'all Mr. Coke's farms seemed like horticulture on a large scale.'" But of the Duke of Sussex stories are plentiful—stories which illustrate his peculiar individuality, the warmth of his heart, the soundness of his politics and the right principles for which he was usually—though not invariably—conspicuous. Of Holkham the Duke pronounced that "to see the propriety, decency and felicity there portrayed is a relief to the mind among the general sufferings of humanity!"[1] One cause, however, greatly cemented the Duke's lifelong friendship for Coke. When His Royal Highness married Lady Cecilia Buggin[2] many people refused to recog-

[1] *A Report of the Transactions at the Holkham Sheep-shearing, 1821*, by R. N. Bacon, p. 101.

[2] The Duke married first, in 1793, Lady Augusta Murray, daughter of the Earl of Dunmore; the marriage was dissolved in 1794. He married, secondly, Lady Cecilia Underwood, daughter of Lord Arran, and widow of Sir George Buggin, afterwards created Duchess of Inverness by Queen Victoria.

nise her or to ask her to their houses; but Coke, knowing that the wedding service had been performed by his friend Archdeacon Glover, at once invited her to Holkham, and the Duke always remembered this with gratitude. On most points, however, his opinions coincided with those held by Coke, particularly on topics political and constitutional.

Moreover the Duke, as a champion of the rights of the people, was out of favour with the Court party, and his interference on behalf of his unfortunate niece, Princess Charlotte, had tended to widen the breach between him and the Regent—a fact which was not calculated to diminish his popularity with the Whigs.

The Duke of Gloucester and Prince Leopold always desired to be treated as private friends when they stayed at Holkham, and to dispense with all etiquette; but the Duke of Sussex, although he kept up a fiction to this effect, was particular that none of the etiquette due to him should be omitted. Coke, however, while according him all the deference which civility demanded, would not abate his independent attitude. Once when the Duke announced his arrival for a Sunday afternoon, Lady Anson pointed out to her father that His Royal Highness would be affronted if no one was at home to receive him. "I cannot help that," Coke replied. "If the Duke chooses to time his arrival for an hour when he knows I always go to church, he cannot complain of my not being at home to receive him."

The Duke used to journey from one country-house to another in his travelling coach, which held an enormous amount of luggage. He drove at a tremendous pace with his four post-horses, and as royalty was

exempt from paying at the toll-bars, there was not even that delay to his progress. Both his footmen were armed, as it was no unusual thing for luggage to be cut from the back of a coach by highwaymen, even in the neighbourhood of London.

The Duke had a great fancy for peculiar servants. At one time he brought with him to Holkham two German servants. Both had very long whiskers and flowing patriarchal beards, while the hair upon the upper lip of one of them was so long that he was forced to wear it plaited. As they had the hair upon the top of their heads powdered and the hair upon their faces left its natural colour, the extraordinary appearance they presented defies description. The Duke also took about with him two negro servants, one of whom, a diminutive person, went by the name of Blackey, the Duke having named him Blackman; the other, whom the Duke engaged about the date of the emancipation of slaves, being named by His Royal Highness, Freeman. Blackey, who was the Duke's valet-de-chambre, always stood behind the Duke's chair at meals at Holkham in company with a very tall *chasseur*, to whom he afforded a ridiculous contrast in size.

Blackey's experiences at Holkham were somewhat unfortunate. On his first visit there, after the Duke had gone to bed, the small valet-de-chambre suffered the usual fate of strangers in the house, he missed his way; and after wandering about for some time in despair he entered the wrong room by mistake, and crept into bed with one of the footmen belonging to another guest in the house, who had only arrived that night. In the days before the abolition of slavery, many persons in England

had never seen a negro; and early in the morning every one who slept within earshot of Blackey's temporary resting-place, was roused by frantic shouts of terror. Awaking in the dim light of dawn and espying a black face reposing upon the pillow, the unfortunate footman thought that his bedfellow was the devil!

On another occasion, an unlucky lady's-maid having left her mistress late, was endeavouring vainly to find her way back to her own room. As she strayed with her solitary candle about the interminable and now deserted passages, suddenly, from out of the gloom of a doorway, there sprang into sight an uncouth form and black face which sent her flying for her life and shrieking as she went. It was Blackey, whose slumbers she had unwittingly disturbed while he waited and dozed on the mat outside the Duke's room.

Mr. Henry Stephenson,[1] who afterwards married Lady Mary Keppel, was the Duke's secretary. Every night at Holkham, when the Duke moved off to bed, he used to wind his arm affectionately round his secretary's neck and use him as a walking-stick, Mr. Stephenson being about 5 ft. 5 in., and the Duke being 6 ft. 4 in., and large in proportion.

The Duke was absolutely reckless in his expenditure, and used to borrow money from any one who would lend it to him. Henry Stephenson did his utmost to check this habit, but he found that no sooner had he, with difficulty, paid off the Duke's tailor or any other tradesman with whom His Royal Highness was in

[1] Henry Frederick Stephenson, private secretary to the Duke of Sussex, married in 1826 Lady Mary Keppel, third daughter of the fourth Earl of Albemarle.

debt, than the Duke, discovering this, would go to that tradesman and borrow the money back again. At length Mr. Stephenson, in despair, told the Duke that it was impossible such a state of affairs could continue. "Unless," he said, "your Royal Highness can give me your word of honour that you will not borrow from the people whom I have paid, I must tender my resignation." The Duke was silent, and Henry Stephenson resigned.

The Duke was somewhat irascible, and when angry was apt to choose the first scapegoat handy on whom to vent his wrath. On one occasion, when he had only just returned to town after a series of country visits, he could not resist the bait of a day's sport at Holkham, where woodcock were plentiful, so he posted down to Norfolk at his usual reckless speed.

On the morning when he arrived the shooters had already started, so he drove on straight to the covert, taking Mr. Harry Keppel with him in the carriage. The Duke was already equipped in a new shooting-coat with pockets enough to hold many birds, and upon arriving at the covert-side, and hearing a good deal of firing going on, he got out of the carriage in a great hurry in order not to miss a moment more than was absolutely necessary away from his favourite sport.

At that instant he had an experience somewhat like the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz; an unlucky rain of shot descended, peppering his hat and new coat, and stinging him sharply. He became very excited, and swore that he would find out who was the culprit. Mr. Keppel, who had not left the carriage at the time, was, of course, exempt from suspicion, but Archie

Macdonald,[1] who had been standing near at hand, came in for the accusation, and in vain tried to assure the indignant Duke that his gun had not been fired.

Suddenly, from the midst of the covert, Fox Maule, afterwards Lord Panmure, forced his way, and, addressing the Duke, begged him on Archie's behalf to excuse the latter, who, he said, was very nervous and felt His Royal Highness's rebuke severely. If only His Royal Highness, he added, would take no further notice of the peppering received, he should be most grateful, as he—Fox Maule—was the real culprit!

The Duke, however, appears to have had little excuse for criticising the methods of his fellow-sportsmen, if one may judge by the following record. On one occasion when, in curious contrast to sport in the present day, we are told that "Lord Moira and several other Shots of Distinction on a visit to Mr. Coke produced to the Game Larder within *six days*, the enormous list of Slaughter" represented by a total of 1307 killed, we are further informed—

> "A Royal Duke was one of the above destructive Corps, but being of the *Military* order, his Return, or rather the Return made for him, was of a different kind, viz.:
>
> Killed, of Game . . . 0
> Wounded in the legs . . . 1 *Foot-marker*, slightly
> Wounded in the face . . . 1 *Groom*, severely
> Wounded on the Head of a Friend 1 *Hat*
> Ditto, on the left rump . . 1 *Horse!*"[2]

The Duke considered himself a great bibliophile, and when at Holkham we are told he "took his station every morning in the upper library, attended some-

[1] Archibald Macdonald, succeeded his father as third Baronet in 1832; equerry to the Duke of Sussex.

[2] *Rural Sports*, by the Rev. W. B. Daniel (1813), Vol. IV.

times by that terror of Tories, Archdeacon Glover, and sometimes by an accomplished Neapolitan Patriot, Prince Cimitelli "—whereupon—"a most animated battle took place within the ring-fence of the library!"[1] Young Lady Jerningham, writing to her sister, Lady Bedingfield, from Holkham, in August, 1819, says:—

> "The Duke was intended for a domestic good man —a great deal of quick feeling and tact, a fine spirit and sence of honor, a great lover of comfort in the old style, and old-fashioned grandeur such as Baronial Halls and all the Apendages—he *let out* one night talking quickly about Hampton Court—"If I was King I should certainly live there and rout out all the present inhabitants in the only Palace in England." I found also he had a flower garden at Kensington wh' he delights in and Quantities of *piping Bullfinches*, Old China, and a vast library—for he is a very good scholar. You may imagine this *Mélange of a Man*. . . . He drinks abundantly of everything, and many a time I have wished to dash it from him, for I think he is killing himself, tho' the Brunswick strength of Constitution seems struggling through Asthma, Corpulence and a Bacchanalian life when *He is* in the Chair. . . . He has *no* prejudices about Catholics of *any clime* and I doubt if he does not like our Religion infinitely better than his own. We went into his dressing-room to see his Pipes with Miss Coke. On the table of the bed-room laid a little bible with a common prayer book, both bound in tortoishell and gold, his name or Cypher on one side and a cross and I.H.S. on the other."[2]

The Duke was Grand Master of the Order of Freemasons, and in 1818 it was proposed that Coke should be installed as Provincial Grand Master. The date was fixed for the Installation, and invitations sent to all

[1] Letter from Mr. Odell to Dr. Parr.
[2] *Jerningham Papers*, Vol. II, p. 144.

the lodges; but a few days before it was to have taken place, news arrived of the death of Lord Anson, Coke's son-in-law, on September 30th, in London, and all the preparations had to be countermanded. After this, Lady Anson was, for a time, seriously ill; and as Coke also lost his sister-in-law, Mrs. Master, the Christmas festivities at Holkham that year were considerably curtailed. But with the dawning of the new year, 1819, a brighter prospect for Holkham and its inhabitants was welcomed by the tireless pen of Mr. Rishton.

Extract from a letter from Martin ffolkes Rishton to T. W. Coke.

"My dear Sir, "LYNN, *January 5th*, 1819.

"Next to my own, believe me nothing can give greater satisfaction and delight to me than to hear of the recovery of Lady Anson and your consequent happiness. Borne down as you have been of late by the accumulated distresses of your family, this return to a state of comfort and quiet of mind will, I hope, continue, and no doubt add greatly to your own good health, and contribute much to the preservation of your life to a far distant period.

"I am past the season of flattery even to a friend, but in your lengthened life is comprised much of the prosperity and happiness of this County, and I may safely add of the whole Kingdom. No man has devoted so great a portion of his fortune, his time and his attention, to the real improvement and advancement of the interests of the community as yourself—(I speak not politically)—and you have the singular good fortune to enjoy in your lifetime the well and hard-earned meed of all those exertions, not only at home, but all over Europe, and I may safely add Asia and America, as the indefatigable and disinterested friend of mankind. What good fortune is mine to have from early youth enjoyed the friendship and countenance of such a character!

". . . If I can hold fast what I have got, I look forward to being valiant enough to break through my resolution of sleeping no more out of Lynn till I sleep with my fathers—for which I have made due preparation—and I hope, tho' 'tis a bold hope, once more to see Holkham and all its enchantments, of whose beauties and highly cultivated scenery my eyes have witnessed the rise, progress and present completion—no wonder then that I should feel interested in it, in all its branches, human as well as vegetable."

Whether the hope expressed in this letter was fated to be gratified is not known; but the following year, 1820, Martin Rishton died in the month of September, aged seventy-three, and was buried in a vault beneath Hillington Church, where, eight months earlier, had been laid the remains of his beloved wife, once the pretty Maria Allen of that long-ago clandestine marriage at Ypres.

Some months, however, after the receipt of this the last letter extant from him to Coke, the return of brighter days at Holkham, which he had hailed, held out every prospect of the deferred ceremony of the Installation at last taking place, and it was finally fixed for Monday, August 23rd, 1819. The Duke arrived in Norwich the previous Sunday, and the eventful day dawned brilliantly fine. Every street in Norwich was crowded with people, and all the windows were gay with bunting and filled with spectators. At 10.30 a.m. the Duke drove in an open carriage with Coke to the Assembly Rooms, from which daylight—and all chance of prying eyes—had been previously excluded. The windows were carefully closed and the whole place illuminated artificially, so that in the warm August weather the heat must have been intolerable.

Three hundred and twenty Brethren received the Duke at the entrance, but of what took place behind those darkened windows and closed doors no knowledge penetrated to the outside world; even the record of those present is not known, for the entry which should have preserved their names begins with "H.R.H. the Duke of Sussex, G.M., and Thos. Coke, Esqre., P.G.M.," after which the Provincial Grand Secretary's courage must have failed him, for he left four blank pages on the minute-book with no further entries!

The ceremony over, at twelve o'clock the Brethren in full masonic dress issued forth into daylight and formed in procession to march through the streets to the cathedral. Soldiers lined the way, and through their midst, in the brilliant sunshine, wound the picturesque train. First marched the Brethren dressed in black, then followed the trumpeters, next, men with drawn swords; next, a long procession gay with banners; after which, borne by two stewards, came the banner of the Provincial Grand Master, behind which Coke walked, and finally the banner of the Grand Master, behind which walked the Duke of Sussex. The poles of the banners were gilt, the flags of white silk adorned by inscriptions in gold lettering; and as the procession wound through the quaint old streets of Norwich, and towards the gateway of the Cathedral, the enthusiasm of the spectators was great.

Lady Jerningham, writing to her sister, Lady Bedingfield, from Holkham, August 25th, relates:—

> "We all went to the Cathedral; it was a beautiful sight, 30,000 people waiting all perfectly quiet and

in good humour, and the procession from the Assembly Rooms to the Cathedral, the Duke walking all the way on foot, and cheered enthusiastically. We were in Prebendary Woodhouse's and Thurlow's Closets upstairs during the service and saw it all."[1]

As they reached the Erpingham Gate, the long procession formed up, one by one, making a passage through which the Duke and Coke passed to the western door of the cathedral, where they were met by the Dean and Canons, and conducted to the choir. The cathedral was packed with ladies, who all rose as they entered, while the organ played "God save the King." Upon a platform was a chair of purple velvet for the Duke, while Coke sat with the Brethren, the banners ranged around them. A special service followed, at the conclusion of which the Duke drove with Coke, in the latter's barouche, through the streets of Norwich, while the Brethren returned in procession to the Chapel Field House.

But the long, tiring day was not yet over. At 5.30 a banquet was given in St. Andrew's Hall, once a fine old church, said by Blomefield to have been built by Sir Thomas Erpingham, the gallant old knight who gave the signal to start the battle of Agincourt. At the tables in the hall the Brethren again appeared in full masonic dress, and the side benches were reserved for ladies who came to watch the proceedings. The Duke presided, seated in another chair of purple velvet, with Coke beside him. At seven o'clock the banquet ended, the tables were removed, and while this was being done, the Duke rose three times, and said to

[1] *Jerningham Papers*, Vol. II, p. 185.

the guests at each table: "Brethren, the Grand Master and Provincial Grand Master drink a cup of Good Fellowship with you all!" *Non nobis* was then sung, and many speeches followed. The Duke pointed out how: "The knowledge, the veneration of Coke's name is not confined to this country, is not confined to this kingdom, but is echoed from one side of Europe to the other. He is hailed and blessed wherever he goes"; and the hall rang with such applause that, used as Coke was to such demonstrations, it is recorded he appeared unnerved at the enthusiasm displayed. In his brief reply, however, he made two requests to the Duke: first, that certain farmers were anxious to take a glass of wine with His Royal Highness; and, secondly, that the Duke would enliven the proceedings with a song. Both requests were granted, and, as the Duke loved the sound of his own voice, the hall soon re-sounded cheerfully to his rendering of "Precious Goblet"—no doubt an appropriate choice.

Afterwards, the procession passed through Norwich by torchlight. On the following Wednesday, August 25th, a Grand Chapter was held at Holkham, where the Duke was staying, in order to appoint Coke Provincial Grand Superintendent of Royal Arch Masonry.

Soon after his return to town, the Duke wrote to Coke sending his "best compliments to Miss Coke, and many thanks for all her kindness, as well as an Apology for all the trouble I gave"; when, besides expressing at great length his opinions on current politics, he says:—

> "I hope this letter will find you in good health and still at your hospitable Mansion, as I should be sorry

that my thanks for all your kindness and friendship should come to hand anywhere else. Indeed, my mind and heart were both so full on the morning when I took my leave, that I could not express all I felt on the occasion; sentiments of Affection, esteem and Gratitude never to be obliterated, and which I shall ever endeavour to cultivate. Without flattery, I witnessed at Holkham what I never saw before and which I venerate beyond expression, the true English Character, usefully ornamented by education and travelling, having culled from other countries everything that is useful to Society, without forgetting those principles which constitute the sterling merit of an Englishman.

"Would to God there were many such as you still in this country, then we should not be where we now are, and we should have still to boast of that Yeomanry which was once our pride, and have an energy to assert and maintain those rights for which we were envied and respected by the whole World. I cannot say how all these ideas burst upon my imagination when driving round your Possessions, seeing the Health and Wealth of your farmers, their respectful but independent Spirit. All this is owing to your own example and the result of principles which it is the interest of the Sovereign himself to cultivate and encourage. These are my impressions, and I cannot help giving vent to them when addressing one of the best of Men, and the first Gentleman in England,—a prouder title in my opinion than that of any Peer in these Realms; and so much do I love and respect you, that, so long as your family exists, which I trust for the benefit of Society it may for ever, that this will be the proud distinction they will be *jealous* and ambitious to preserve.

"Kensington Palace,

"*September 2nd*, 1819."

CHAPTER XXVI

CORRESPONDENCE OF LORD MOIRA
1813–1815

WHILE Roscoe was steadily pursuing his task in the quiet library at Holkham, while, in the distant rooms below, the tide of guests came and went, and while Coke was occupied with his ceaseless round of duties —social, political and agricultural—news reached him from time to time of a far-away life, which presented a strange contrast to his own.

The little schoolfellow of former days, now the ruler of a great Empire, never ceased to remember his old friend, or to turn regretful thoughts to the life from which he was severed. On his voyage out to India Lord Moira never omitted an opportunity of apprising Coke of the welfare of himself and his family. On reaching Calcutta, he sent full details of their journey—how, on disembarking from the ship, they had travelled for nine days up the river, pent up in small vessels and suffering from the most intolerable heat; how, although they arrived in good health, and "you know me to be so sturdy that no weather disagrees with me, yet the ladies and children were so bitten with mosquitoes" that "they look as if they had just come out of the small-pox; the

torture literally produces a petty kind of fever"; but how his reception from all classes in India augured well and "the truly able men whom I have found in office seem all disposed to draw with me most cordially; therefore, though the field of business is vast and toilsome to get over, I have the confidence of managing the affairs of this immense Empire with tolerable ease." He described the existence he was now obliged to lead; how he was forced to rise at four every morning in order to get upon his horse before dawn, while Lady Loudoun drove out at the same time in her carriage;—"This every one does to preserve existence. As soon as the sun is above the horizon, the whole crowd hurries home; the rays are singularly mischievous here . . . exposure to the sun almost certainly brings illness"; and, as he concluded pathetically—

> "You will say there is not much comfort in this kind of life. Who could think of comfort in a house where there are two hundred and eighty servants? One's feeling does not go beyond tolerance. Yet, amid what would appear to you a mob, there is perfect regularity, perfect tranquillity. These servants address each other only in whispers or by signs. Though they wear fine embroidered shoes in the street, they pace the marble halls barefooted, so that the silence is extraordinary. Clean, intelligent, watchful of all your wishes, handy and gravely respectful, such is the character of these poor fellows. Gliding along the colonnades in their white muslin gowns with crimson and silver turbans and sashes, they look wonderfully picturesque."

Later, letters came from him full of many interesting descriptions of his statesmanship, and of his wars with the Holkar, the Peishwa and other foes whom he

successfully crushed. When unable to write personally, owing to stress of work, he deputed Lady Loudoun to do so; and he constantly sent gifts of an experimental nature to Coke;—partridge eggs to be hatched at Holkham; lovely Nepaul pheasants to be reared there; seeds of beautiful Indian grasses; and once a supply of Indian pickles prepared by Cossim al Kahn, cousin-german to the Sovereign of Oude, who was "allowed to be the first cook in India." Often Coke recommended friends to his care. "Never make an excuse for recommending any one to me," urged Lord Moira; "it is at least the means of my hearing from you. If I cannot, perhaps, benefit all your protégés, I shall make them sensible that their introduction is a good one!"

But although his letters to Coke contain details of his daily life and of his government of a great Empire, they reveal a side of his character other than that of the statesman. It is as a sportsman writing to a kindred sportsman that he usually addresses his old friend. His descriptions of his rhinoceros and tiger hunts are written with a graphic enthusiasm which show his certainty of the interest they will excite. At a prospect of returning home, his first thought is: "I now look forward to a day's rabbit shooting with you again!" and when, despite his boasted strength, he is worn out with the anxiety of his position and the unhealthiness of the climate, his one craving is for the relief and the revivifying effect of sport. "If I didn't bag a rhinoceros to my gun," he remarks once when concluding an exciting account of his chase of an immense rhinoceros which escaped him, "I did what

was as fully satisfactory: I shook off a nasty sluggish sense of ailment, the consequence of being overworked, which has made me look to being a valetudinarian. At present I am facing an uncommonly hot and heavy season with all my pristine indifference to the weather."

The following letter, graphically illustrated, was written by him to Coke after fifteen months' residence in India:—

Lord Moira to Thomas William Coke.

"Camp at Bahadinghar,

"*January 22nd,* 1815.

"My dear Coke,

"The friendly earnestness of your inquiries about us is very cheering at this distance. We are all well, as I may term it. My three children have indeed got the Whooping Cough, but it is a malady ordinarily mild in this country, so that I am told I ought to consider it as fortunate that they have caught it. Lady Loudoun has borne our camp life, with all its fatigues, nobly. Since the 11th of November she has never been in a house, and I do assure you we have had some trying weather. When we were more to the Northward, within the influence of the winds from the Snowy Mountains, the cold was at times very keen. What renders it the more sensible was the extraordinary difference between the temperature at sunrise and in the afternoon. One day at Bareilly, this difference amounted to 41 degrees of Fahrenheit. I believe this to have been an unprecedented extreme, arising not merely from the sun, but from a sudden change of wind.

But generally the heat of the middle of the day exceeded by thirty degrees that of the morning.

"You desire to know all particulars of our peregrination. It has been so extensive that I should write a volume were I to attempt fulfilling your wishes literally. Suffice it to say that my journey has been as gratifying in point of curiosity as I trust it will prove useful for the company and for the Natives. The country over which we have passed since we first took to our tents has been one vast uniform Plain, highly cultivated in some parts, in others absolutely waste. Moving North-west from Bareilly, we approached the Mountains which border this immense flat. Beyond three ridges of black mountains, the Peaks of the vast Himalaya Chain are seen rising above the clouds. These are the mountains, probably the highest in the world, which separate Tartary from India. They are covered with eternal snow, presenting, when the light strikes upon them at sunrise, a most gorgeous spectacle. Before I quit the Plain, I ought to tell you how truly gratifying it was to see what Plenty and Comfort reigned in the Provinces recently annexed to the Company's Dominion, though when they came under our sway they were in a state of Depopulation. In the City of Bareilly, when we were there, Grain sold in the market at less than an English shilling for the English quarter, and altho' the Retailer must have charged a profit for himself upon it. Grain is a kind of Tare universally preferred in this Country to Oats as food for horses.

"I had the curiosity to inform myself what were the expenses of a traveller in any of the Serais, or Caravan-

seras, as we call them. I ascertained that, for less than twopence halfpenny English, a traveller could have for the night a comfortable room, a lamp, a frame to stretch his bedding on, and a dish of good Curry for his supper, besides a stall for his horse. Were he disposed to spend more, for three halfpence additional he could have his horse well fed, and could have a Hookah for himself to smoke. These little facts paint the state of a country better than any other representation.

"We went to Hurdwar where the Ganges breaks thro' the mountains into the Plain. It is even there a grand river, at that period perhaps it was at its lowest; yet it consisted of four streams divided by strong banks and Islands which are covered with water in the rainy season, each as broad as the Thames at Putney. Two of these were fordable, the others not. The scenery is sublimely romantic, tho' one is too much under the rear hills to see much of the Snowy Ridges. We afterwards crossed the Jumna to Kurnal in the Sikh country. The Patans and Rohillas from Bareilly to the Jumna, and the Sikhs and Jhaats, after crossing the river, are perhaps the finest races of men I have ever seen. They are frank, active, energetic and brave in a high degree. Folks in Calcutta talk of managing them just as they do the timid listless Bengalese. But the proud-spirited chiefs in this quarter require coaxing and attention to keep them right. From inhabiting a country in which there is not a fence, and which they consequently traverse in every direction, they are uniformly most skilful as well as bold horsemen. I have seen a Quart Bottle placed on the ground broken by one of these fellows with a ball from his match-lock, as he rode past it at full speed.

This was not accidental. It is a common exercise with them. I have seen at least a hundred of them try it. Several bottles were broken and every shot went near the mark. Another practice is equally interesting. A horseman with a lance is made to pursue another who is armed with only a sword. The lancer gets upon the left of the other, who thence appears defenceless. But the swordsman throws his right leg out of the stirrup, turns himself, rests solely upon the foot in the left stirrup, and in this posture parries with his sabre the thrusts of the lancer, the horses being in full gallop.

"I ought, however, to restrict myself more to what you have desired to know, one point of which is our mode of travelling. This is almost always on Elephants. You might think the progress would be slow upon such an animal. It is not so. For the first two hours the Elephant will go readily at the rate of six miles an hour, afterwards he will decline to about four; but he will carry you for twelve hours, only refreshing himself by eating such tufts of herbage as he can gather in going along. Their docility and intelligence are surprising. When directed by their driver to break a way thro' trees, the judgment with which they apply their strength is extraordinary. They seem to examine the tree, and to feel by gentle pushes in which direction it will yield most easily. They then make a grand effort and either decimate it or snap it. The flexibility of their legs enables them to keep their balance admirably, and they thus go safely along ledges which you would think impassable for such massy creatures. It is in getting up and down the banks of Ravines that their merit is most conspicuous. They carry you in

perfect security across places of that nature absolutely impracticable for a horse. In descending they throw their hind legs back so as to trail on the ground and act as a drag. The breadth of their fore-feet and the strength of their nails enables them to direct and moderate their progress down the steep with admirable certainty. In getting up the bank they kneel with the fore-legs, and force themselves up by the strength of the hinder. The driver, as you have seen in the prints, sits behind the animal's head, in which posture his legs are covered by the Elephant's spreading ears. The master sits in a Houdah, a machine formed like the body of a one-horse chaise. It will hold two persons, and there is a seat behind it for the servant who carries your umbrella. In travelling you always sit. In shooting you must learn to stand; an attainment which requires some practice, as it depends on your balancing yourself to the motion of the Elephant which much resembles that of a boat in a head sea. You will judge from this that a particular knack for this sort of shooting must be acquired. A bar the height of one's waist, before and on each side, prevents one's being thrown out by an ordinary shock, but is insufficient if the Elephant has a mind to dislodge you.

"For sporting, a line is formed of all the Elephants in the field, so that moving on abreast they head up the game. Jungle is here the name for all uncultivated ground. It is of two kinds, very distinct Grass jungle, and Tree jungle. Of the former there are vast plains covered with a coarse grass (quite dry in the shooting season) from six to eight feet high; and among this

one usually finds Reed beds of still higher growth in patches where the water does not readily dry up. In this kind of covert one expects to find tigers, wild boars, Hog Deer (so called from running with the head down like a hog), Stags as large as ours and Buffaloes. The Birds found in it are Black Partridges which I think are the Francolin of Sicily, a variety of small Bitterns, and large Waterhens in the wet parts; and the Florikin, a sort of Bustard as large as a hen Turkey. This last is the best kind of game for the table in India. The Tree Jungle usually consists of shabby trees thinly scattered among thorny bushes. Here one finds Tigers, Leopards, Bears, Hyænas, Wolves, Monkeys, Spotted Deer (the Axis), Antelopes, Hares, smaller than those in Europe, Civit Cats, Wild Cats, and sometimes Buffaloes. The Birds are Peafowl, Jungle Cocks, (the original of our Poultry), Black Partridges, Grey Do. less than ours, and Quails. Having given you this general description of what may be found by an Indian Sporting Party, I will proceed to recount to you two or three of the most interesting days which have occurred to me in the field.

"When we reached Afzulqhar we were assured of the people we should find tigers in the neighbourhood, for that two of the villagers had been eaten within the last fortnight. We set about preparing for the chase against the next morning, and our hopes were powerfully strengthened. In the evening a tiger struck at one of our camp followers within three hundred yards of the tents, but missed him, though he tore his clothes. The tiger was not hungry, and only vented

his indignation on the fellow for coming too near a sugar-cane bed in which he was eating a cow. The shouts of some Sepoys who happened to be behind the man prevented the animal repeating his blows. In the night two tigers prowled round our camp, calling to each other in a most lugubrious tune. Before day we took the field, as we had a vast expanse of grass jungle to beat. I had ordered the greater part of our baggage elephants to be brought out, carrying only Pads, as well as those which bore gentlemen in Houdahs. A line of ninety-three elephants was really a fine sight. The use of so extensive a front is this: when a tiger is tumbled upon in the grass, he attempts to get off ahead. The jungle is so high that you rarely see him at that moment, and you only judge by the peculiar motion of the jungle the kind of animal that is going off. As soon as Tally-ho (never applied to anything inferior to the tiger) is cried, everybody forces his elephant forward in the direction. By keeping his trunk above the grass, the elephant breathes freely, and gets on with considerable speed. The tiger, in the meantime, becomes out of breath by forcing his way through the dusty covert, and when he finds that he cannot prevent the elephants gaining on him, he endeavours to get to the flank of the line. If it be a short one, he often succeeds; in which case, if unobserved, he lies down and lets the elephants pass forward. A long line defeats this manœuvre and obliges him to go ahead again.

"We had not beaten the plain above half an hour, declining to fire at deer or any inferior game, when some of the elephants by their piping gave notice of

a tiger being at hand. Piping is a sort of querulous noise which indicates anxiety in unsteady elephants. A good practised elephant, instead of piping, will often keenly run the scent as a dog does that of a hare. The tiger was soon roused. I, in the centre of the line, got a clear sight of him as he passed a spot free from grass where a small pool had been dried up. He was about threescore yards from me. I fired, and saw distinctly that I hit him in the flank. He plunged into the jungle, and we followed him. Soon after, there was a cry that he was seen on our right flank. Before we could reason on the impossibility of his having reached that point, every elephant was hurried to the place. I was sensible at once that we were wrong, but there was too much confusion to admit of the error being rectified. We speedily discovered a tiger, which, the moment I saw it, I distinguished not to be the same I had before seen. The former was extraordinarily large and dark coloured. Several shots were fired at this new one, but I am doubtful if any hit it. At length I got a view of it and wounded it severely. It ran about two hundred yards, and then crouched. Another gentleman and I got up to it at the same time. We saw it lying with its head on its paws, prepared to spring. We fired at the same instant, and probably both hit it. Other sportsmen came up, as it had in vain attempted to rise, and pierced it with a score of balls at least.

"On examining it, every one who had seen the original tiger was satisfied this was not the same. Then we arranged ourselves to go back after that one. We had just got into order when a man on horseback came galloping to tell us he had seen a tiger creeping along

the skirt of the jungle. Though this could not be that which we wished to retrieve, the prospect of driving a tiger out of the jungle was not to be foregone. We hastened full speed towards the place. My elephant was much the fastest in the field, and got considerably ahead of the others. As we approached the spot where the Tiger was expected to be found, there was a little break in the Jungle of about one hundred yards breadth of Greensward. The tiger sprung up before me, and attempted to cross this space. The roughness of the motion of our rapid advance had obliged me to sit down, so that I had not my gun ready, and the animal had got nearly to the opposite side of the opening, when from some instantaneous impulse, it changed its mind. It suddenly turned, and with a tremendous roar came dashing at my elephant. I luckily met it with a two-ounce ball which hit it at the point of the shoulder; so that, rolling over like a rabbit, it lay dead within thirty-five yards of me. After this we worked for three hours in search of our original tiger, in vain. Overcome with the heat, we at length gave it up. The two tigers which we had killed were full-grown and fine animals, but by no means comparable to the one which escaped us.—Now let me assure you that there is something really animating and interesting in this kind of sport. The strength and fierceness of the animal, joined to a degree of doubt how your elephant may behave, gives a sufficient agitation to the spirits to rouse one to a glowing sensation.

"On another day we went to look for a tiger which the natives assured us had for four or five years inhabited a thicket close to a pool of water near their village. At

the place indicated we found immediately two together. Unluckily we had divided into two parties, our numbers being but small, to beat at once each bank of the pool. The tigers suddenly attacked and put to flight every elephant that was on the side opposite to that where I happened to be. As the elephants ran among some trees, several Houdahs were broken or knocked off, and while we were inquiring into the hurts of our comrades, the tigers got away.

"When we crossed the Jumna, a new species of game put us out of conceit with tigers. We had then got into the country of lions; and tho' the lion here is not so large as that of Africa, he is a formidable beast. In short a lion sounds better than a tiger; therefore I was very keen to get a shot at one. We sought them several days, but luckily they are not as plentiful as blackbirds, so we were disappointed. At length, one day near Hansi, we discovered a majestic lion by the side of a pool, whither he had come to drink. As he saw us at a considerable distance, he made off, and we soon lost sight of him. We followed, however, in the direction which he had taken, traversing a plain, with thin, tho' tall grass, and studded with small trees like our hawthorns. We calculated that he would make for a thicket, which we saw at a distance, and thither we beat our course.

"Soon after we had entered it, Tally-ho was cried on one of our flanks. All the elephants hurried to the point, where the bushes happened to be very thick. The first elephant which approached the spot assured us that our quarry was there; for he ran away into the plain as hard as he could. Some of our

staunch elephants soon penetrated into the Brake, notwithstanding the quantity of thorns with which it was beset; and out bolted a leopard. He made much show of gallant resistance, but soon fell, pierced with more than a dozen balls. Tho' it was really a fine animal, we were vexed at thus having been taken off our lion, and we examined whether perchance he still remained in the thicket. On the further side, in some sand, we discovered his footing. We traversed the plain from thicket to thicket in search of him, finding repeatedly the print of his feet to guide us in the right direction. After about four hours' persevering pursuit (during which, however, we stumbled on some Hyænas, and Nylghaus) a horseman came galloping to us and told us he had seen a magnificent lion go into a thicket about a mile ahead of us. We hastened thither, and, of course, formed our lines and dashed into the Covert.

"We were six sportsmen, with about the same number of Pad elephants. These are elephants which carry no Houdah, that they may the more easily break thro' thick bushes; and, ordinarily, an attendant rides each of them, for the purpose of getting down quickly by the tail to pick up small game. We had scarcely got into the thicket when a prodigious roaring and rustling among some tall bushes gave us notice that we were upon the enemy. I discovered something going off thro' the brake and fired at it. My people called out that they saw it fall; but, immediately after, a lioness dashed away from the place in full view. Several shots were fired at her, but she made good her way thro' some very strong cover, and we pressed after her

with all rapidity. Not finding her, we took it for granted she had got off to another thicket at some hundred yards distance. We hastened to beat it. While we were in it, one of the Pad elephants which had turned tail, rejoined us; and its Rider informed us that it was he who had first stumbled on the lions, of which there were three. He described one as having a fine mane. We returned to the first thicket to beat it more carefully. The lion which I had wounded was soon found. Its shoulder was broken, yet it attempted to make battle, and the gentleman who discovered it was forced to give it another shot. We then forced our way thro' the thickest bushes, which were so thorny that it was astonishing the elephants could be brought to face them. The lioness was there. Having had two or three wounds, she had lain close and let us pass directly over her before, finding herself perceived, she rushed out boldly, and seizing one of the elephants by the haunches, worried it desperately. It was the elephant next to mine, but I did not dare to fire, lest I should hit the elephant. At last the lioness quitted it, and prepared to spring at another. But as I was watching for that opportunity, I instantly gave her a shot which tumbled her over. She crept into a strong brake, whither my elephant followed her intrepidly, and, with another ball, I killed her.

"For near two hours afterwards, we sought the old lion, but in vain. The one which I first wounded was a young lion about the size of the lioness, but without a mane. For days after we went out in search of a lion which had been preying for some days in the neighbourhood of the place which we had then reached.

Lady Loudoun gallantly insisted upon being of the Party. We took out, or rather dispatched before us, some horsemen to inquire of the peasants whether they had happened to see the animal. The horsemen came back to us and told us that they themselves had seen two lions go into a thicket. The line was formed, Lady Loudoun's elephant (a very staunch one) being placed between mine and that of a steady sportsman. Every instant we expected to see the animals start up, but all these delightful palpitations were disappointed. On the further side of the Covert we found their tracks in the sand. We followed the direction, every now and then discovering the footing, fruitlessly, for a long time; but we were obliged to content ourselves with bringing home some Antelopes of a kind different from those which are found within the Jumna.

"I have given you the occurrences of this day to show you what a gallant spirit Lady Loudoun exerts. I should not have yielded to her wish of accompanying us had I then witnessed what I subsequently saw.

"Three days after, I separated with some gentlemen from the line of march to take our chance of finding a lion. For three hours we could only learn from the peasants that they were not rarely seen in the district, but that it was quite uncertain where they might be found. The lion, indeed, seems to be a very migratory animal, never (as far as I could learn) being tempted by plenty of food to remain in the same place above ten days or a fortnight. At length some people who were tending some large herds of cattle told us that there were two lions in their neighbourhood, for within the last week the animals had been seen often, and every night

carried off some of their cattle. Within two hundred yards of these people there was a low brake of thorny bushes, much resembling our blackthorn; but altho' amidst these leafless shrubs there were a few evergreen tufts in a space of eight or ten acres, it was a place which you would have thought too thin to hold a fox. We beat it, more from thinking it incumbent not to leave anything behind, than from hoping to find game in it.

"Scarcely had we entered it when two lionesses sprang up. The shots which were immediately fired at them all missed. Two rifles of mine missed fire at one of them, which presented a fair mark to me. She made a little circuit in the plain and came into the Covert again. In the meantime, we followed the other. She crept to the edge of the bushes, whence she made a sudden dart at a native trooper who was at no great distance. Fortunately the fellow was well mounted, for she coursed him fairly, and for a time gained ground upon him, so as to give us great anxiety. At length the horse got into his speed, and she gave over the chase, but, as she turned behind a small ridge we thought she was gone off over the plain. We, therefore, imagined we should have a better chance with the other, which we were now informed, had come back to the Brake. Of course, we turned. It was found immediately and received two or three wounds. On turning round one of the evergreens, I met it; though it was much crippled, it made a handsome effort to attack my elephant. I shot it in the forehead and put an end to the contest.

"Then some of the horsemen came to us to say

that they had seen the other lioness come back. We approached the point at which they had seen her enter; when she sprang from some thick tufts, seized one of the elephants by both the ears with her claws, and began gnawing its forehead with great activity. The elephant did not relish the sport at all. He threw himself about so violently to shake off the lioness that he dislodged the gentleman from the Houdah. His fall was broken luckily by his tumbling on a bush. At the same instant the elephant got rid of the lioness. Her attention, however, was luckily attracted in the instant by another elephant, whom she seized by the haunches, and tore in such a manner that he did not recover it for a month. When she quitted him, she betook herself to a thick bush. There she received wounds from many of us. At length we attempted to make our elephants trample her out. On this, she endeavoured to compass another charge among us. But her strength was unequal to it, and she died pierced with a number of balls. Before she rushed from the bush my elephant had actually tried to set its foot upon her, but could not quite reach her among the thick entwined sticks which protected her.

"Tho' the lion here is not so large as those I have seen from Africa, and has not so much mass as the tiger, I imagine it to have a superiority over the latter. Tigers are very rarely found where there are lions. There is much more activity and daring spirit in the lion than in the tiger. Those that we killed, however, could not be called small. The largest of these lionesses measured nine feet four inches from the nose to the tip of the tail. The other was two inches

shorter. In the more bare parts of the plain, where we found the lions, there were many of the Pin-Tailed Grouse. By the English here they are called Rock Pigeons. Their shape, their rapid flight, and their making circles in the air, have occasioned this erroneous classification. I shot some of them, tho' they are very wary. There were also a good many Bustards, differing from those of Norfolk in having a black topping, and some large white downy feathers about the neck.

"And now, my dear Coke, I have (at various snatches of leisure) completed a sportsman's journal which I hope may amuse you. It will prove to you, at least, that I thought often about you. To make it more intelligible, I have added four little drawings, which I got a gentleman to make as illustrations of circumstances relative to the sport.[1]

"God bless you,

"Very faithfully yours,

"MOIRA."[2]

[1] These drawings represent features of Indian life now familiar to Europeans, and therefore of little interest to the modern reader.

[2] In 1816 Lord Moira was created Marquis of Hastings.

CHAPTER XXVII

QUEEN CAROLINE

Ætat 63–67

AFTER the death of the Princess Charlotte, among other suggestions to secure the succession was that of the divorce and remarriage of the Prince Regent.

Dr. Samuel Parr to T. W. Coke.

"HATTON, *Dec.* 17*th*, 1817.

"Dear and Honoured Sir,

"Accept my warmest thanks for a noble present of game. In a very enlightened party I drank to the health of the Donor on Tuesday last, and I shall pay the same tribute again on Saturday next. This year the festivity of my birthday, January 26th, will be kept at Hatton Parsonage. I shall have a very large party of friends, and every one of them will cordially join with me in my grateful and respectful testimony to the founder of our game.

"As to public matters, I fear the very worst. I am told that when the Regent went down to Prince Leopold, their conversation was not quite amicable, and towards the close of it Leopold said, 'The greatest favour that your Royal Highness can confer upon me is to withdraw.' You and I very well know the difference of their personal and political characters. We should be prepared for the absence of affection and confidence at their interview. But what sovereign—what father—what gentleman—what

man with the common properties of humanity would at such a crisis start a series of topics offensive to an afflicted husband? The miscreant to whom I advert, unites the insolence of a Despot—the insanity of a profligate—the coarseness of a blackguard and the ferocity of a brute. Will a divorce be attempted? Where is the advantage if it be carried? Must we not have a long Regency aggravated by the evils of a long Minority? To be sure the Royal Marriage Act ought to be repealed.

"I think that the protest of the House of Lords is a masterpiece of political wisdom and constitutional vigilance. Let me hope that you and Miss Coke and all other members of your household are in perfect health.

"The older I grow, and the more seriously I reflect, the more painful are my feelings upon the bigotry, servility and intolerance of my clerical brethren. They hate you in Norfolk, and, from Bishops down to Curates, they dislike me from the East, and the West, and the North, and the South. But I hope to carry into another and a better world certain well-considered principles which never will be shaken by the hope of temporal good or the fear of temporal evil. I have the honour to be, dear sir, with unfeigned respect and gratitude,

"Your friend and obedient humble servant,

"S. PARR."

The Same to the Same.

"Dear Sir, "*January 24th*, HATTON.

"Accept my very heartiest thanks for the magnificent present of game which in truth would have adorned a Royal Table. We shall drink the birthday toast from the noble cup with which you presented me some time ago. We shall quaff a bumper to the founder of our game, and you will be glad to hear that your old schoolfellow, the Bishop of Worcester, who always mentions you in terms of the greatest possible respect, has killed a fine doe for the express purpose of decorating my Feast with a side

of venison. You know that Mr. Price, who is not only one of our best scholars, and perhaps the purest writer of English now living, but a consistent and strenuous Foxite, has united with Lady Caroline Price to favour me with a pheasant and hare from Foxley in Herefordshire. Whiggism, good, genuine invincible Whiggism will be the spirit of the day, and among my visitors there will not be one who will not hail the long known and higly honoured name of Mr. Coke of Norfolk. I believe that H.R.H. the Duke of Gloucester himself would not disdain to join our party, for it abounds, I assure you, with intellect and learning, and science, as well as the best political principles.

"You will give us a significant nod of assent, and a gracious smile of approbation if you read the intended Catalogue of toasts. But they do not include the Merry Wives of Windsor, the Royal Inhabitant of Carlton House, the Prime Minister and his Hireling Associates, the servile Lord Chancellor, the sanguinary Chief Justice of the King's Bench, nor any vassal of the Court, nor any oppressor in the State, nor any worldly-minded, intolerant Bigot in the Church. We shall be men of Sense, men of Learning, men of Science, real Gentlemen, real Englishmen and real Christians. Oh! that you were among us.

"Miss Coke will laugh, and her smiles will have all the lovely graces without the latent levity of

φιλομμειδὴς Ἀφροδίτη[1]

when she hears that I have added two most musical bells to my Tower, and that the virgin peal will be rung upon eight sweet songsters for my birthday.

"I have the honour to be, dear and ever-honoured Sir, Your faithful friend and most respectful obedient servant "S. PARR.

"Since writing this I have been favoured with Miss Coke's kind letter, and thank her for it most heartily."

[1] "The laughter-loving Aphrodite."

Dr. Parr's pride in his new bells no doubt distracted his thoughts temporarily from public affairs; but his subsequent letters to Coke deal with more serious matters. The events which followed occupied the attention of all thoughtful men.

Shortly after the death of Princess Charlotte, the marriages of the Dukes of Clarence, Kent and Cambridge were announced. The Duke of Kent married a sister of Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg; and with the birth of their child, Princess Victoria, in May, 1819, all immediate anxiety respecting the succession to the throne was set at rest. But, throughout the country, people still continued to agitate for Parliamentary Reform, and their attitude became more threatening as they saw little prospect of any prompt realisation of their wishes. On the 28th of June, a large meeting elected Sir Charles Worseley the "Legislatorial representative" for Birmingham; and another meeting was forthwith convened to be held at Manchester on August 9th to choose a representative for that town. The authorities viewed this proposal with alarm; they declared the proposed meeting to be illegal, but, notwithstanding, the people determined to hold it, and finally assembled on August 16th in St. Peter's Field. The military charged them, and although the massacre which ensued was actually the result of mismanagement on the part of the magistrates, the policy which had given rise to it was generally recognised to be indefensible; still more so was the charge imputed by the Whigs to Lord Sidmouth and the Government of employing spies who, for their own advantage, instigated those disturbances which they afterwards assumed credit to themselves for having suppressed.

One of the most palpable instances of this was afforded by a man named Oliver, who passed himself off among the people as a political reformer, in order to give information against those who concurred with his pretended views. Respecting him, Coke used to relate the following story:—

> "Oliver was one of the first spies thus employed by Lord Sidmouth to excite the people in the north to rebel against the Parliament. He was shortly afterwards taken up, but was set at liberty by an order from Lord Sidmouth; he went abroad and received a pension from Government. Mitchell was another spy, and a great friend of Oliver's. When the former was in prison no one was allowed to see him but Oliver. He excited the people to use seditious language, in order to betray them, and at a great public meeting for the purpose (as Lord Sidmouth and the Government said) of advocating Reform in Parliament, he proposed the division of large properties among the poorer classes, especially advocating the division of Mr. Coke's, Lord Fitzwilliam's and the Duke of Bedford's. This proposition, however, was received by the people in sullen silence and marked disapprobation."[1]

It was afterwards stated that upon the body of malcontents at Manchester, estimated at ten or twelve thousand, *two knives* were all the weapons found;[2] and that the Government had directly instigated the proceedings of some of those supposed seditious insurgents, Coke did not hesitate to state publicly. In Parliament he announced it as "his firm opinion that

[1] From the notebook of the Hon. the Rev. T. Keppel in the possession of the Rev. George Keppel.

[2] *An Answer to a Clergyman's letter to T. W. Coke, Esqre., M.P.*, by the Rev. George Glover, A.M., p. 14. Printed by Stevenson, Matchett and Stevenson, 1817.

the Government were themselves most strongly implicated in the events at Manchester. It was his opinion and he could not change it. They set their faces against all inquiries for fear of something coming out which would deeply implicate themselves." At this announcement, however, the Speaker intervened and further comments or revelations on Coke's part were suppressed.[1]

While proper representation was denied to the people, little hope existed of any reduction of the heavy taxation; and in view of this fact Coke appears to have contemplated retrenchment. Richard Rush relates:—[2]

"November 29th, 1819, Mr. Coke dines with us. He is all cordiality and good spirits. His conversation is of England, English persons, and English things. He told anecdotes — some of the Royal Family . . . some of the Prince Regent who used to be his guest at Holkham when Prince of Wales. Speaking of the nobility, he said that of the eighteen Dukes in the three Kingdoms, nine were on the Ministerial side, and nine in Opposition; he enumerated the latter, most of whom were his friends; and added that two of the Royal Dukes, the Duke of Kent and the Duke of Sussex, usually voted with the Opposition. Speaking of the *taxes*, he said that himself and others of his country, whom he named, (opulent landholders) had resolved that they would pay no more; that is, if they were taxed higher in some things, they would retrench their consumption in others, so as to keep at the point where they stood.

"How Mr. Coke would have reconciled retrenchment anywhere with his magnificent and long-

[1] December 7th, 1819, *Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. XLI, p. 81.
[2] *The Court of London*, 1873, by Richard Rush, pp. 188–9.

indulged hospitalities, was not for me to inquire. The Duke de Medina Celi, in Spain, once finding his expenses too great, determined on retrenchment. Calling up his butler, chamberlain, equerry, and all others, he desired to know what could be dispensed with; and, upon receiving reports from all, it was ascertained that the only item which could possibly be struck from the annual expenses, consistently with the comforts and dignity of his household, was *one lamp* in the hall! Would the noble-hearted proprietor of Holkham, whom I am proud to have called my friend, have retrenched after that fashion?"

Following upon the Manchester massacre, the Government passed the Six Acts, which had for their object the suppression of sedition,—so called; of the circulation of dangerous publications; and which also invested magistrates with a certain power to disarm the people by entitling them to search suspected places. Although never intended to be permanent, these bills were not only injudicious on the part of the Government, but an active infringement both of the liberty of the subject and of the press, so that, as such, they were viewed by the Whigs with strong disapprobation.

"I am sick of the times!" wrote the Bishop of Norwich to Coke; "but as long as there are in the Kingdom ten such men as Lord Grey, Lord Albemarle and yourself, I will never despair."

Every year in Norwich the anniversary of Fox's birthday, January 24th, was largely attended by Whigs throughout the county. In 1820 it was decided to give this function a national character in order to raise a strong expression of disapproval with regard to the action of the Government in passing the famous Six Acts.

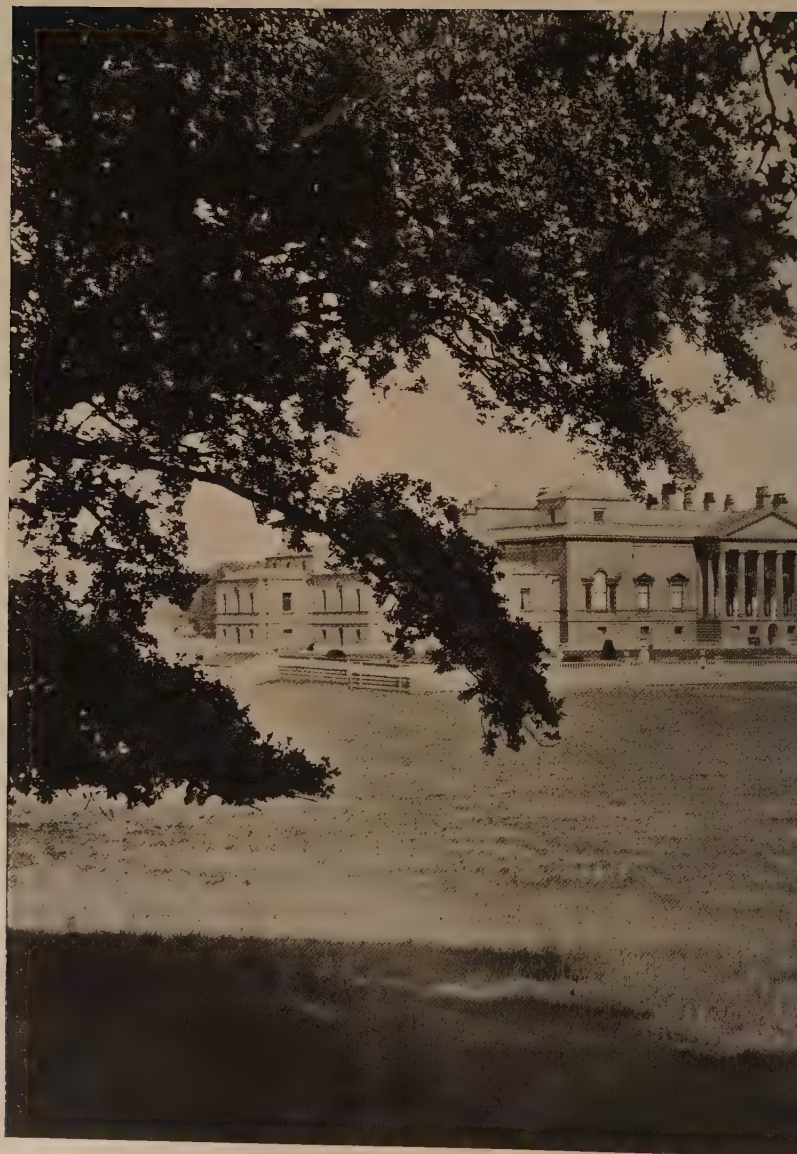
The Duke of Sussex at once agreed to be present at the dinner. He arrived at Holkham for the purpose, accompanied by his equerry, afterwards George, Lord Albemarle, who relates :—

> "Our second day's journey landed us at Holkham, where we found the Duke of Norfolk and other leaders of the movement. I now first became acquainted with the owner of the mansion, then so well known as 'Coke of Norfolk.' He was in his sixty-sixth year, and retained much of that prepossessing appearance which in his youthful days had procured for him the appellation of the handsome Englishman."[1]

The entertainment was to take place in St. Andrew's Hall, and no expense was spared to make the somewhat bare building warm and comfortable for the occasion. Boards were laid down over the stone floor and covered with matting ; cast-iron stoves were introduced and kept burning for days beforehand ; thus, as a local wag remarks, "gratifying the warmest expectations" ; the entrance was screened with hangings of green baize ; and over the principal table a canopy and curtains of the same were raised, shutting it off into a sort of alcove. Between each pillar, lamps were suspended on chains; over the canopied table were placed the names of SUSSEX and of FOX in transparent white globes, while ALBEMARLE, the chairman, shone brightly at the other end of the room.

These practical and homely arrangements concluded, Norwich waited, expectant. Before the dinner, however, the Duke of Sussex received the news at Holkham of the serious illness of his brother the Duke of Kent,

[1] *Fifty Years of My Life*, Vol. II, p. 105.



DISTANT VIEW OF HOLKHAM, THE

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which much upset him, as the latter was his favourite brother. After never having had a day's illness in his life, the Duke of Kent was now dangerously ill from a trifling cause—he had got his feet wet one day when out for a walk, cold had supervened, and grave symptoms resulted. This news, combined with the knowledge that George III was rapidly sinking, made it seem probable that the Duke of Sussex would be unable to be present at the dinner, after all; but a more favourable report of the Duke of Kent arriving on the 24th, he decided to keep to his original programme.

Accordingly, just before the dinner hour, he and Mr. Coke arrived at St. Andrew's Hall. The table assigned to them and to Lord Albemarle, in dignified seclusion under the green baize canopy, was, we learn, adorned with "an extremely elegant allegorical decoration," in short, a wonderful erection of sugar, representing the Temple of Liberty; on the top of this, Fame held a blue and white flag, inscribed with the initials of the Magna Charta, and other flags upon it bore the words *Bill of Rights* and *Trial by Jury*. A band played during the dinner, and the company, as usual, became very convivial. As soon as dessert was placed upon the table, the toasts and speeches began. The principal toast of the evening, "The Memory of Charles James Fox," was drunk in respectful silence. Next followed "The Respectability of the Crown, the Durability of the Constitution, and the Prosperity of the People," and then others, among them: "The Speedy and Final Extinction of all Laws, wherever they exist, which tend to obstruct the Sacred Rights of Conscience"; "Lord

ERSKINE AND THE TRIAL BY JURY—OUR BEST BULWARK AGAINST THE ENCROACHMENTS OF DESPOTISM"; "A FULL, FAIR AND FREE REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE IN PARLIAMENT"; "THE UNIVERSAL EXTENSION OF EDUCATION, AND MAY WE SOON SEE OUR HOUSE OUR CASTLE."

The speeches, of course, turned upon the real rather than the ostensible motive of the meeting, a protest against the measures of the living rather than a commemoration of the virtues of the dead. Coke, speaking briefly, combined both. In a few strong words he contrasted the policy of Fox and Pitt: "How Fox had stood unrivalled as a statesman, a friend to the people, an undoubted friend to all mankind; how, if he had chosen to compromise his principles, he could have risen to any office; but how he had never failed those who relied on him. How Pitt, on the contrary, as a parliamentary man, had failed to keep his promises to the people. He had promised the Repeal of the Test Acts, Reform in Parliament, and to the Catholics that Emancipation which caused the Union of Ireland. Annually, it was true, he had made fine speeches on the Slave Trade, but as frequently, the question was lost." Once, Coke said, and once only, he, personally, had been in a division with Pitt when there was a minority of 11; next year Fox had carried the same question with a majority of 160. "This," he added, "shows the duplicity of the man, and the corruption of the House!"

In a few quick words Coke next condemned the American war and the war with France. He stated that he wished it to be understood that there was no

man more zealously attached than himself to the existence of the reigning Royal Family, or more anxious that they should remain at the head of the Government; but that it was the actions of the Ministers with which he found fault. It was, he considered, impossible for any man not actually paid for conniving at corruption to be blind to the maladministration of the present Ministry. "We are told to look at the Pilot who weathered the storm. How has the storm been weathered? —the nation is left in a state bordering on bankruptcy! In the last short Session more mischief has been done to the Constitution than in any of the reigns of our worst Monarchs."

He called the Six Acts *Bills of Blood*, and hoped that none of the people would agree to the employment of force in the place of conciliation, or by their silence appear to acquiesce in such a measure. He concluded by thanking those present for the manner in which they had drunk his health.

"This," he said, "is the proudest station a man can hold. When you first elected me your representative, I told you that if you did not desert me, I would not desert you. (Loud Applause.) From my opposition to the American war I was called a rebel; to the French war, I was called a Jacobin; now I am called a Radical. Yet if I were able to recall my votes I should not wish to change one of them. It has been my wish to keep down the influence of the Crown and uphold the economy of the Public Purse. If the day should ever come when the liberties of the people are infringed, when the Englishman's house is no longer his castle, though I hope it may never be necessary, yet I trust we shall all rise to a man, and

defy 'The Right Divine of Kings to govern wrong!'"[1]

The Duke of Sussex followed, and pronounced the Six Acts to be "violent, unnecessary and unconstitutional," quoting, in support of his own opinion, that of the Duke of Kent. The proceedings terminated by all singing a song composed by John Taylor in memory of Charles James Fox, followed by the 'Trumpet of Liberty,' the song which had been sung at Holkham at the centenary of the Revolution in 1788. Among the five hundred voices raised on this occasion, Lord Albemarle relates how the Duke of Sussex could be heard above all in the inspiriting chorus:

Fall, Tyrants, fall, fall, fall,
These are the days of Liberty,
Fall, Tyrants, fall!

And while this dinner was taking place in Norwich, the Duke of Kent, unknown to his brother, was lying dead, leaving as heir to the throne a little baby girl of eight months old. But so slowly did news travel in those days, that although the Duke died in Devonshire on the 23rd, his death had not been heard of in Norwich by the evening of the following day, and only the morning after the dinner did the post bring the sad intelligence. The Duke of Sussex, who in company with the party from Holkham had adjourned to Quidenham, immediately returned to town.

Six days later, on January 29th, George III ceased to live. George IV was so ill at the time, having contracted

[1] *A Report of the proceedings at the dinner to celebrate the Anniversary of the Birthday of Charles James Fox*, published in Norwich, 1820, pp. 20–28.

a severe cold at Brighton, that he was considered to be in imminent danger. The physicians in attendance bled him profusely, 130 ounces of blood being taken from him, and, by February 5th, he was pronounced to be slightly better; but the following letter from the Duke of Sussex would seem to indicate that this was not the opinion entertained privately.

(Written on black-edged paper)

H.R.H. the Duke of Sussex to Thomas William Coke.

"*February 5th*, 1820.

"My dear Sir,

"This is the very first day that I have been able to come to myself after the very sad calamity with which it has pleased the Almighty to visit me, as well as the rest of my family. Indeed, since we parted at our mutual friend's Lord Albemarle's, it has been one continued scene of woe and anxiety, but nothing can make me forget your kindness, and therefore, although late, I still hope my expressions of gratitude towards you will be felt by your generous heart as I intend they should. My excellent friend and host at Holkham, as well as his amiable family, must ever be dear to me, and the Similarity of our private Sentiments, as well as those of a Constitutional nature, will, I hope, form a very intimate and lasting intimacy between us both. The important events which have followed so quickly upon one another will afford a great field for serious consideration. Time must unravel much which at the present awful period appears mysterious, but no one who is a well wisher to his country can avoid remarking to himself that the present moment is one of great import. Whether he looks to the health of the King, which some *Court Speculators* are anxious to state as perfectly *restored*, or to the question of the Queen,[1] which is one of great difficulty and dilemma,

[1] Queen Caroline, wife of George IV.

all appear to me as threatening the tranquillity of a Country which itself requires repose. The friends of the Constitution will I hope be firm and watchful, but at the same time, as far as it is consistent with their duty, *calm*, for an angry spirit might be prejudicial to a good case. These are my sentiments, and as I never will shrink from my duty, so I think my friends should be honestly acquainted by me of my opinion. You will *always find me at my post*, and ready to support these principles which I feel a glory in professing.

"Enclosed are the two ways of making the Ginger Beer which I promised Miss Coke; you will therefore have the kindness to present them to her with my best compliments, and thanks for all her kindness to me.

"Parliament will not be dissolved, as I hear, till the middle of March; however, it is right to be upon the watch, and I have certain information that *Court minions* are canvassing in various boroughs. Should I get any intelligence of importance, you may depend upon hearing from me.

"Believe me, most sincerely, my dear Sir,

"Your obliged and devoted friend,

"AUGUSTUS FREDERICK.

"Kensington Palace.

"P.S.—May I request you to present my compliments to your daughter, Lady Anson, and to say that when she comes to town I shall be most happy to call upon her ladyship."

The Duke of Sussex, having been in disfavour with his brother, now found his position somewhat unpleasant. On the 30th, when the King was proclaimed at two o'clock, the members of the Royal Family attended at Carlton House. About fifty persons were present, including the Privy Councillors. The King,

although very ill, struggled up to see the Council, and was very gracious and affectionate to every one present except the Duke of Sussex, who was not admitted to his bedchamber with the rest of the Royal Family; and who, presenting an air of sullen depression, stopped in the outer room with the other Privy Councillors, none of whom spoke to him.[1]

A reconciliation, however, was shortly afterwards effected between him and George IV, an account of which occurs in the following letter:—

Henry Stephenson to Thomas William Coke.

"My dear Sir, "TEMPLE, *February 19th*, 1820.

"Upon the supposition that you would like to know the circumstance respecting the reconciliation between the King and the Duke of Sussex, I venture to trouble you with the details as nearly as I can remember.

"I was sitting with His Royal Highness at Kensington when the Dukes of Gloucester and Clarence came in. I retired, and returned in about ten minutes, when the Duke of Sussex said:

"'You will be surprised to hear that it is made up between the King and me. The Duke of York began by stating that His Majesty had felt much hurt at the part which I had taken respecting the Princess Charlotte, but as she was now dead, he was desirous that all that had passed should be forgotten, and that the family should be united in friendship and affection; he added that I was to be left to myself as to my Politics, as they formed no cause of irritation, and that he would not interfere with them. I stated that I felt I could with success defend my conduct upon the subject of the Princess Charlotte, but as His Majesty wished to have no

[1] *Croker Papers*, Vol. I, p. 156.

recollection upon that point, I would have none; that the situation between him and me was now altered; he was my Sovereign and I his subject, and therefore bound to obey his commands whenever he was pleased to make them.'

"It was then arranged that the Duke of Sussex should call upon the Duke of York on the following day, and from thence to Carlton House—which was done—the King and the Duke shook hands, talked over family affairs, chiefly about the Duke of Kent, and the interview ended.

"This places the Duke of Sussex on high ground; which I ventured to state to His Royal Highness after the whole had passed, and told him that he had associated himself with the first men of the country, upon the best principles of the Constitution—and that he had gained their confidence; the Court, of itself, had thought right to recall its own slights and restore him—as far as the *power of the Court* could so do—to the situation from which he had been removed. He replied that he had so pledged himself, and that it would be his own fault if he lost that confidence which he valued and which he had inspired. I said that it was impossible that His Royal Highness ever should.

"Lord Liverpool, at his own desire, had an interview with Brougham yesterday for a considerable time.

"The Vice-Chancellor is extinguished.

"I have again to thank you for your kind present of game, and hope that what I have written will carry its own excuse.

"Believe me, my dear Sir,

"Ever your most faithful servant,

"Henry L. Stephenson."

Meanwhile, the new King found a long-dreaded and serious dilemma awaiting him in the proposed advent of the Queen. Caroline, who had been abroad since

1814, now lost no time in informing her friends that she intended to return and assert her rights as Queen of England. The anxiety with regard to her proceedings did much towards retarding the King's recovery. On the first Sunday after his accession, February 6th, he recollected that no alteration had been made in the Liturgy, and this greatly agitated him. In some of the churches that day the Queen was prayed for, in some her name was omitted. On February 14th the Cabinet sat till past two o'clock in the morning, devoting their consideration to the future of this question. The King, however, refused to allow the Queen's name to appear in the Liturgy, and in response to the urgent representations of some of the Ministers, he replied that nothing should induce him to alter this decision, whoever should ask him.

Dr. Parr alone appears to have found a satisfactory way out of the difficulty, and for a whole year did not fail every Sunday to pray loudly and emphatically for Queen Caroline. In January, 1821, when he wrote to Coke to announce that, on his approaching birthday—

> "My numerous guests and this host will have the satisfaction and the honour of drinking a bumper to the munificent founder of our feast, in a gigantic chine, a turkey almost unreasonable, a brace of pheasants and a brace of hares . . . an imperial, rather than a regal present;"—

he added triumphantly:—

> "If you were a parson I should raise a laugh by telling you that our most loyal Archbishop of Canterbury and Bishop of London were guilty of a strange oversight when they countersigned for the

order for omitting the name of the Queen in the Liturgy. We have in the Church what is called a Bidding Prayer,[1] and you may learn from any Cantab or any Oxonian that it is used in the University Church before sermon. It was prepared for the use of all churches when I was a boy: my orthodox pastor used it in his pulpit at Harrow. Our orthodox wiseacres somehow or other forget this prayer when the King and Royal Family make a figure; and, therefore, having no directions to the contrary, I boldly pray for our Gracious Queen Caroline—and by strict construction of law I should be guilty of censure if I did not pray for her. . . ."

Dr. Parr's conduct in this matter was a great source of satisfaction to himself, and in his eyes afforded fresh excuse for the loss of the bishopric which he knew to have been his due. "I think, Sir," he announced on one occasion, "that I have stuff in me to make a Bishop of, but, Sir, I *would* always speak my mind. I burnt my quarters with the old gentleman (George III) by loudly protesting against that wicked American war; and with the young gentleman (George IV) by taking the part of his much-injured wife."[2]

It is probable, however, that George IV's belief in the misconduct of the Queen was genuine. Still more is it obvious that had he, personally, been more respected, the Queen's cause would have met with sterner criticism in the opinion of the majority. In the after-light thrown on events, there appears little doubt

[1] The Bidding Prayer is used at various public schools and at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge in the University Church before the official sermon every Sunday in Term time; it commemorates all former benefactors of the University, including the names of the reigning King and Queen.

[2] *Parriana*, Vol. I, p. 31.

that her mind was slightly unhinged; for even while the more serious charges against her were recognised to be fictitious, her warmest partisans were forced to admit that her general conduct was deplorably deficient in tact and dignity. But all the circumstances of her ill-omened marriage—a marriage which, at the best, had been but legalised bigamy, which the Prince himself had severed within a year, and to which he had never subsequently been faithful—made it inevitable that any endeavour on his part to enact the rôle of the injured husband should recoil more seriously upon himself. The sense of fair play was aroused throughout the nation; they felt that, for all which the Queen might have become, the King had himself to thank; and Caroline, instead of being condemned for her levity, became the heroine of the rabble, the martyred Queen of an adoring mob. Those of more unbiassed judgment were disgusted at the scandal and publicity of proceedings which, even assuming her to be guilty, were extremely impolitic. The Duke of Sussex, Coke and Lord Albemarle were all agreed that, until actual immorality had been proved, the Queen was entitled to be considered innocent, to be recognised as Queen of England, and to be prayed for in the Liturgy as such; still more, that an attempt like the Bill of Pains and Penalties to brand her officially with disgrace, must result in degrading Royalty and in inflaming the people. In June, 1820, the Duke went down to Holkham to attend the Sheep-shearing—a function which he seldom missed—when, despite his recent reconciliation with the Court, he expressed his disgust very freely to Coke with regard to

the impending trial, and subsequently wrote as follows :—

H.R.H. the Duke of Sussex to T. W. Coke.

"*July 24th*, 1820.

"Dear Coke,

"I cannot allow this day to pass without expressing to you my best thanks for all your friendly attentions to me during my delightful stay at Holkham. Untill this morning I have not had a moment to myself, and naturally a multiplicity of business had accumulated for my return. When I left Albemarle to return here I felt a pang I can not describe, but I own I was glad you were not in the room at the moment when I set off, for taking leave at all times is unpleasant, but doubly so when combined with the idea that one is going to meet trouble. That this has been pretty much the case since my arrival you may easily guess. The Press is full of stories, and one hardly knows what to believe; however, this is certain, that our friend Albemarle, instead of enjoying and attending to the Harvest, will have to be at the House at ten o'clock in the morning, and, if not there, the fine of three hundred Pounds a day is to be levied from him and each of the defaulters who do not attend to the orders of the House.

"Erskine is, I understand, to present another petition from the Queen this evening, demanding to know the nature, the place, and the time of the charges which are to be brought against her. I have heard it said that this will be refused, so much the Worse; but as, till now, I am not forced to be present, so I avoid appearing untill I can help it, and as I have not sought to give an opinion upon the Libel matter, so I am not to be blamed when conscientiously performing a painful Duty which I can not avoid.

"In our times the Crown has not been so much in danger as at present, and those who have brought matters to such a Crisis, and have not ventured to

caution the higher powers upon so serious a Case, have much to answer both to their Sovereign and to the Country. . . .

"The Duchess of Gloucester, with whom I dined yesterday, desired her best Compliments to you and Miss Coke, of which I promised to take charge. She spoke in raptures of Holkham and of her reception there; I could only join and chorus the remarks. Your dinner is indeed for Friday next, when I hope you will meet some of your friends, George Anson will be of the party and Mr. [illegible] has likewise accepted of the invitation. I address this to Norwich as I imagine you will be there on account of the assizes. Hoping that your leg is quite mended, I take my leave of you for the present with

"signing myself most sincerely,
"My dear Coke,
"Your ever obliged and devoted
"AUGUSTUS FREDERICK."

In public, however, the Duke of Sussex, in view of his being newly restored to favour with the King, did not wish to express his opinions too freely at this juncture. Therefore, he sent a letter to the Chancellor begging to be excused from being present at the trial, on the ground of consanguinity. When this letter was read out in the House, the Duke of York exclaimed angrily: "I have much stronger ground for asking leave of absence than the Duke of Sussex, and yet I should be ashamed not to be present to do my duty!" This remark was not well received, and the Duke of Sussex was given leave of absence with scarcely a dissentient voice.

Early in August Coke attended a meeting in Norwich to protest against the Bill of Pains and Penalties, and

to support a petition to the House of Commons against the bill.[1] Meanwhile, his friend, Lord Albemarle, as the Duke had anticipated, bitterly lamented being absent from his harvest and forced to spend the lovely summer days in the stifling atmosphere of the House. "I think," he wrote to Holkham, on August 20th, "if we sit daily, only for six hours, from ten to four, some weeks must be wanting to get through it. I am going tomorrow till Thursday to Holland House; we shall come into London every morning, but it will be pleasanter to dine and sleep in the country."[2] On September 3rd he wrote: "The moment I am released I intend to go to Grey's for one night, and then to Lexham, and from thence the following morning to Holkham. I will just stop to tell my story, and then wish to hurry home to see the remainder of my harvest, for it will scarcely be over." During their father's absence at the trial, Lady Anne and her sister stayed at Holkham with

[1] This is the only instance which I have traced in which Coke took an active part on the Queen's behalf; but that he did not fail systematically to do so is shown by the Norwich poet-laureate, J. Parkinson, who, in a doggerel entitled, *The Independent Statesman; a respectful tribute to T. W. Coke*, sings:

> "At each public Meeting it plainly is seen
> You felt as a Man for our ill-fated Queen;
> It was lucky for her there were many like you,
> Who exerted themselves for to bring full in view,
> Both Art and Deception you plainly could find
> Were employed for to make every Briton inclined
> To treat our lov'd Queen with mark'd disrespect,
> But, thank God, her cause you did never neglect
> To espouse in a manner that plainly foretold
> You thought the Italians were cited by gold"; etc.

[2] Lord Holland took a house in London every year, Holland House being completely in the country. The walk from Hyde Park Corner to Kensington after dusk was lonely and dangerous, being infested with footpads. (Dr. Drew, Holland House MS.)

Miss Coke, and Lord Albemarle wrote almost daily to Lady Anne in order that she might keep Mr. Coke informed of what he facetiously terms the proceedings of "Mr. Coke's friend—His Majesty!"[1] When the prosecution closed, the trial was adjourned till October, at which date Lord Albemarle resumed his post in the House of Lords, and Lady Anne once more returned to Holkham.

On Thursday, October 26th, Lord Albemarle wrote:—

"My dearest Anne,

"We can now guess when, but not how our business will end. In ten days it will be decided, and, if it is, I fear rioting is unavoidable in London.

"Prince Leopold is just returned from calling at Brandenburg House. The Queen did not see him. He has disgraced himself by not receiving her in his own house when she arrived without a friend to protect. It is, perhaps, never too late to do right. Lady Fitzwilliam is going to the Queen as soon as the Solicitor-General has finished. Carlton House is now called Nero's Hotel. If the Lords decide against the Queen, I shall go to pay my respects to her, being convinced of her innocence. If she is acquitted by the Lords I shall not go, being determined to go to no Court. I have heard enough in forty-two days to be determined not to trouble myself about Kings and Queens.

"Ever your affectionate father,

"ALBEMARLE."

On the evening of the 6th November the House divided on the second reading—Contents, 123; Non-

[1] These letters, from the MSS. in the possession of the Rev. George Keppel, have already appeared in *Fifty Years of My Life*, Vol. II, pp. 125–36. I therefore only insert one which was not previously published in full.

contents, 95; Majority 28. "The instant the attendance is over I shall set off for Holkham, where I am anxious to see you all again," wrote Lord Albemarle impatiently. "I thought of the battue yesterday, and was glad the day was so fine." On the 10th November Lord Liverpool withdrew his Bill of Pains and Penalties, and the event was celebrated with rejoicing throughout the land. Almost immediately afterwards the Duke of Sussex set off on a round of visits, and towards the end of the month arrived at Holkham. The part which he had played in not supporting the trial of the Queen rendered him exceedingly popular, and he was greeted *en route* by enthusiastic cries of "The Queen and Sussex for ever!"

The following Christmas he was again expected at Holkham, but was unable to be present.

Extract from a Letter of H.R.H. the Duke of Sussex to Thomas William Coke.

"*Christmas Day*, 1820.

"Dear Coke,

"This day recalls to my mind that I was to have been with you where I should have been most happy, and therefore I must console myself in some degree by writing you a few lines, and expressing to you my sad disappointment at being prevented to fulfill [*sic*] a promise which, in every account, would have been most dear to me. I can assure you that my mind and heart are completely with you at this moment.

"I had a good deal of conversation with Glover[1] upon the actual state of affairs, and I am clearly of opinion that *County meetings* ought to be, and, if I might be allowed a more arbitrary expression, *must be called* to address *His Majesty* and *both Houses*

[1] Archdeacon Glover, the Duke's private chaplain.

upon the events which have taken place, expressing in firm and Constitutional language the abhorrence of the country to the measures which have been, and are at present, favoured; their detestation of a Bill of Pains and Penalties; and an earnest recommendation that all further proceedings relating to the Q. should be dropt, except for making a Provision *suitable to her rank* and for restoring her *name to the Liturgy*, accompanied with every other advantage to which she has a right from her situation.

"The noble and splendid triumph which our friends have had in the County of Durham, Lord Grey attending the meeting, etc., are so many additional reasons for urging all honest men to come forward, backed by public opinion. This sentiment, this conviction alone can bring the Ministers to themselves; for, so long as the Opposition is not supported by the people, the Opinions which they express in both Houses are rather advantageous to the Government than not, as they tend to deter many; but when Ministers find that public opinion goes with their adversaries, *then* and *then only* will they get frightened. When you in the House of Commons and my friend Lord Albemarle in the House of Lords can come down to both Houses with a petition from the County of Norfolk, and will support the same with a few remarks, I am satisfied that you will be doing a most important service towards quieting the public feeling and towards supporting Constitutional Monarchy than any other measure you can devise.

"The Duke of Gloucester, whom I saw yesterday, expressed himself most kindly towards you, and seemed delighted with his party at Holkham. I found him very right in his principles, expressing himself most correctly upon the State of Affairs, and fully satisfied that something must and ought to be done, and that this *could only* be brought about by a *Change* of *Measures* and of *Men*. Indeed, I was delighted to find that other of the family coincided with me in opinions which I have long formed and which I never can alter. *Live and let live* is one of

your admirable proverbs, a sentiment so congenial with the principles of our Constitution, that, who does not act upon it, I set down for an enemy to Society as well as to his Country.

"On Tuesday next my son is to have the happiness of being your guest. I hope you will like him, for, without vanity, I can say he is a very fine fellow, and has had the good fortune to make himself friends wherever he has been. My happiness would have been much greater could I have met him there, but, alas, I am under the command of a surgeon who, I fear, will keep possession of my unfortunate carcass for some time, but as I am assured that I shall be ultimately cured, I have made up my mind to submit to severe discipline without a murmur. Lord Liverpool, I am told, tendered his resignation on Saturday, but luckily has not been accepted. Russell states that Peel refuses the offer of being President of the Board of Control, so that the present Cabinet appears to be in a glorious state of confusion. When Rogues fall out, honest men may hope to gain the day. God grant that in the present instance this proverb may prove true. . . .

"We certainly live in very awful times, and the want of Unity and Energy do not a little increase the evil. Do pray consider the first part of my letter, for I am convinced that County meetings are of vital importance in the present conjunction of affairs. With this impression I propose writing to Albemarle. We must not be out of humour if we cannot carry matters just as we wish, but, on the contrary, we ought to redouble our exertions to conquer every difficulty. Should you agree with me in these observations, independent of what I have recommended in the previous part of my letter, there should be another Resolution introduced approving of the conduct of those Peers who upon Constitutional grounds resisted the Bill of Pains and Penalties. To such a vote no objection can be raised, and all discussion which might tend to divide the opinions of persons who might be collected to-

gether would be avoided. The King of France's speech as well as the message of the President of the United States will be read with much interest. When shall we be able to lay before the public such a favourable picture of our financial Arrangements? With such men, and with such measures as are now employed, we cannot expect to be better than we are, but, on the contrary, to decline still more in consequence and credit.

"Pray remember me most kindly to Miss Coke and to every other member of your family who may be at Holkham, and believe me always, my dear Coke, with every sentiment of affectionate regard and real esteem,

"As sincerely as unalterably yours ever,

"AUGUSTUS FREDERICK.

"George Keppel spent with me three months at Tunbridge Wells and I was quite sorry to part with him."

In the following August, however, the unfortunate Queen settled all disputes unexpectedly by her demise. In the eyes of her partisans, her exit at this psychological juncture confirmed her in all the glory of martyrdom. The Rev. J. Horseman, the poetaster before alluded to, sent Coke a copy of a sermon preached by him the Sunday following the Queen's death; in which, while plainly hinting that her life as well as her honour had been attempted by her enemies, he extols her as a "Christian heroine and a Christian Martyr," and foretells that, in the future, "every nation upon earth will revere her as a great and good woman." He mentions also that the last words she uttered were: "They have destroyed me, but I forgive them; I die at peace with all mankind!" He enclosed with the

sermon some verses of his own composition, far from complimentary to the King :—

THE ANNOUNCEMENT—AN IMPROMPTU.

"And is she dead?" the eager Monarch cried,
"Sweet Esterhazy then shall be our bride.
George is himself again, so blithe and frisky.
Come let us drink our dear new Queen in whiskey!"

THE KING'S FIRST SPEECH TO HIS IRISH SUBJECTS ON LANDING IN IRELAND.

"Papist and Protestant, and Whig and Tory,
In loyal concord join to raise my glory.
I love your whiskey and have lost my wife;
This is the happiest moment of my life!
My radicals cry 'Blarney!'—No such thing;
You love, as Englishmen once loved, your King.
And I'm your loving King by Right Divine.
Your healths I'll drink in whiskey; drink ye mine!
Mine is an Irish, not an English heart.
What joy to come! what sorrow to depart!
While I can stay with you, oh! let's be gay!
The Queen is dead! Hip! Whiskey! Hip! Horray!"

About the same date Coke received a letter from Sir Francis Burdett, in which, while requesting information on certain agricultural matters, he refers to the death of the Queen in terms at once feeling and rational.

Sir Francis Burdett to Thomas William Coke.

"Kirby Park, *Aug. 9th*, 1821.

"Dear Coke,

"Forgive the trouble so miserable a Sciolist as myself in the noble science of agriculture presumes to give you, by pestering you with questions which

cannot but make you laugh at him; but the enclosed herb is pronounced here to be a noxious weed, which I, on the contrary, take to be the grass you said was so valuable and which you call'd Jarrow, to the best of my recollection. Have the goodness to tell me whether it is or not, and if not, have the goodness to enclose me a specimen that I may see the difference. I hope you have had better weather in Norfolk than we have here, otherwise Ld. Liverpool's remedy, a bad harvest, is nearly certain to take place, than which there can scarcely be, in my apprehension, a greater evil, and we had certainly better bear the ills we have than such a remedy.

"So the poor Queen is gone, and made an honourable exit; poor thing, it is well over; no one, wishing her well, could wish it otherwise. She could not have remained with dignity, nor have departed in better time or manner. Her memory will, if I am not mistaken, be respected, and her sad lot never mentioned without a sigh. The first news of her death will perhaps bring the King joy, but sorrow will succeed, if not repentance.

"Pray make my remembrance acceptable to your admirable, kind—what shall I say?—angelic daughter. This is not flattery, nor hyperbole; for I can of truth say of angelic natures I can form no other conception. This is all very idle, you may perhaps say, about a bit of grass—be it so, it gives me an opportunity of expressing with how much esteem and sincerity I subscribe myself,

"Yours,

"F. Burdett.

"N.B. Another query—when was it Albemarle's servant covered his grass fields with straw?"

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE LAST OF THE "CLIPPINGS"

1821

Ætat 67

WHILE preparations for the Coronation of George IV were going forward in London, a scene of a very different character was being enacted at Holkham, where the forty-third and last Sheep-shearing was taking place.

> "The enjoyments at Holkham," pronounced Dr. Parr, "far surpass all the bustle and transient pleasure which the Coronation will afford. I detest the Tyrant and his Vassels more and more. The Crown, the Parliament, the Administration, the Magistracy, and the Prelacy are every hour sinking into deeper degradation."

And despite the attractions elsewhere, the attendance at the Clippings was never more numerous than on this occasion. The house-guests, who assembled on July 1st, numbered about eighty. Amongst these were the Duke of Sussex, Lords Erskine, Nugent and Arundel, the Duke of Bedford and Lord William Russell, the Duke of Norfolk (Earl Marshal of England), Lords Althorp, Tavistock, Bury, Earl Talbot (the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland); Sir F. Burdett, Sir John Sinclair, the French Consul, the American

Minister, Count Zanoruski, son of a great Polish agriculturist, and many others, who were reinforced on the public days by representatives from every county in England, from all parts of Scotland and Ireland, and from America, Russia, Nova Scotia, France, Sweden and Poland.

Early on the morning of the 2nd, the park became alive with people who all congregated outside the house; the first to arrive were the tenantry and farmers, who had looked forward for weeks beforehand to this, the great event of their year; next came friends from the neighbourhood, who brought their house-parties with them; and, later, visitors from a distance, some of whom had started soon after daybreak. Later still, as a rule, these were joined by arrivals of greater importance, noted strangers who had journeyed far, in order to be present, and to whom the gathering represented solely a scientific, not a social function; till, finally, the party within the house joined those without, and the vast crowd became a strange and representative assembly—royalty, ambassadors, agriculturists, scientists, foreigners who could scarcely speak a word of English, and Norfolk farmers, many of whom had never left their native county.

In days when locomotion was slow and expensive, to many this gathering was the one occasion on which they met friends whom otherwise they would have been destined never to see. The greetings which were eagerly exchanged, the excitement of expected or unexpected encounters, the task of discovering and watching the celebrated men who were present, the vast hum of conversation, the whirling wheels and clattering

hoofs which momentarily heralded fresh arrivals, the interest of recognising these new-comers thus ceaselessly appearing to swell the crowd—all formed a scene more easily imagined than described, and throughout which the genial spirit of good-fellowship that had always constituted the keynote of the meeting was never lost sight of.

Opposite the house, meanwhile, a pretty scene claimed the attention of the onlookers. A party of little girls, directed and assisted by a couple of women, were employed in the manufacture of flax and hemp, some spinning and some breaking the flax. This industry was under the immediate patronage and supervision of Miss Coke, and as her little workers shyly responded to the questions of the strangers who surrounded them, it was noticed how they were anxiously watching the door through which she was shortly to appear. Punctually at ten o'clock she came out on to the lawn, followed by her father and the Duke of Sussex, and their appearance was the signal for a tremendous ovation from the waiting crowd. Coke and his daughter forthwith greeted as many of their friends as was practicable, and as most of those present were desirous to have this distinction, it was no slight task to satisfy even a small portion of those who gathered about them upon the lawn. Soon, however, Coke mounted his horse, and while Miss Coke remained behind to devote her attention to the guests who elected to spend the day in the house and grounds, those who were prepared to follow their host formed into line, and riding, driving, or walking, the long procession set off.

Each day had its special business allotted to it. In 1821, upon the first day they went over the farms, saw the inoculated pasture, inspected the prize cattle and boars, studied any fresh implements which had been brought into use and witnessed the sheep-shearing in the barn. After this they rode over more distant parts of the estate and inspected the land there, the crops and cattle-stacks. At the large farms, refreshments were provided, to which, after their long ride in the keen air, they did ample justice. At three o'clock they returned to Holkham for dinner.

On the second day the little flax-makers were again on the lawn exhibiting a different part of their industry. The procession started at the same hour as on the previous day, when fresh farms were visited and different types of grain and crops inspected. Next, the houses in the village were visited, and the schools which Coke had been building, when any improvement in the construction of the cottages, or in the cultivation of the cottage gardens, was pointed out and criticised. After which the party again repaired to Holkham for dinner.

The third day was devoted to inspecting the carcases of the beasts which had been slaughtered, and to the distribution of prizes—a long and arduous task; while the final dinner and speeches which followed lasted, in all, about seven hours.

On the fourth day the proceedings were ended as far as the general public were concerned, but the house-guests stayed on, papers were read upon agricultural subjects, and agricultural improvements discussed.

And throughout all this time, the personal energy

which was required of Coke almost defies description. Not only had he to enact the duties of host to the large party of guests staying in the house, but, as Dr. Rigby points out, the three public days called for exertions on his part which would have exhausted the endurance and tried the strength of most men. Everything depended on his individual energy and tact. It rested with him to rouse the interest and to keep the attention of a large crowd of varied nationality, status and calibre; to guide the conversation to topics which it was desirable to discuss; to please all, to interest all, to offend none. Still more, the majority of that crowd expected from him some recognition and attention as individuals, and it is said that never, however large the assembly, did he fail to recognise a friend, or to give a cordial greeting, where this was expected and valued.

Dr. Rigby describes how Mr. Coke was, each day, the first on horseback, how, throughout the lengthy morning ride, it was he alone who was the life of the long train who looked to him as their leader, he who directed their attention to whatever was worthy of inspection, who explained with untiring patience whatever required explanation, who, without seeming to dictate, kept the conversation on agricultural subjects. "The interest excited and the general gratification derived from it are the effects of his sole superintendence—of his well-directed single personal exertions," Dr. Rigby relates; "He is everywhere and with every one. . . . He solicits inquiry from every one."[1] At each halt in the ride, little knots of people collected round him and listened with absorbed interest to all

[1] *Holkham and its Agriculture* (1818), by Dr. Rigby, p. 84.

that he said, while for hours he thus sustained the character of leader, lecturer and host.

> "On the last day his exertions were most extraordinary—yet, as the end of his labours approached, instead of exhibiting marks of bodily fatigue or mental exhaustion, he seemed to acquire fresh animation, and to evince to the last an undiminished desire to omit nothing which could inform or gratify his friends; and, finally, in taking leave, he again showed the surprising faculty before adverted to of recognising and noticing large numbers almost individually."[1]

Other contemporary writers confirm the account of how his energy never appeared to flag, his patience never failed, his thoughtfulness was never at fault.[2] Yet despite his almost incredible labours, he always said that the three days of the Holkham Sheep-shearing were the happiest days of his life.

Richard Rush, while staying at Holkham for this gathering, took down notes, as he says, of a "few of the things which struck me, as an American and a stranger, in my visit of a week to this celebrated estate," and the day after his return home he wrote out the account of how "Mr. Coke has benefited England by his example of good farming during forty years, thus increasing the public wealth as well as his own."

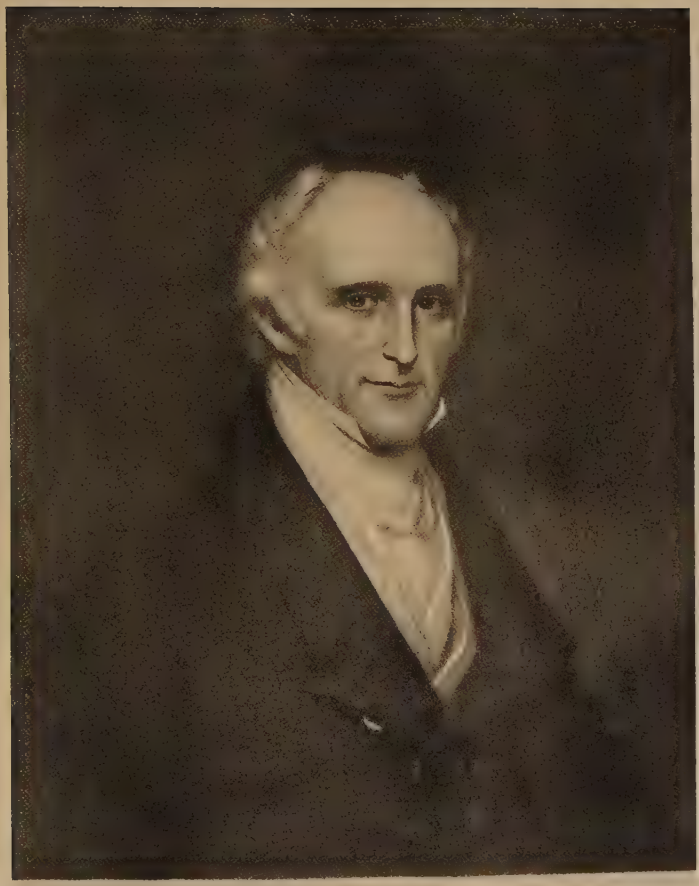
"The occasion on which we were assembled," he explains, "was called the Sheep-shearing. It was the 43rd anniversary of this attractive festival; attractive

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 85.

[2] See *op. cit.*; *A Report of the Transactions at the Holkham Sheep-shearing, 1821*, by R. N. Bacon; and *A Residence at the Court of London*, by Richard Rush, edited by his son, Benjamin Rush (1873).

even to Englishmen, accustomed as they are to agricultural beauty and to fine old homesteads established and maintained throughout the ages. The Sheep-shearing conveys, in itself, but a limited idea of what is witnessed at Holkham. The operations embrace everything connected with agriculture in the broadest sense; such as an inspection of all the farms which make up the Holkham estate, with the modes of tillage practised on each for all varieties of crops; an exhibition of cattle, with the modes of feeding and keeping them; ploughing matches; haymaking; a display of agricultural implements and modes of using them; the visiting of various outbuildings, stables, and so on, best adapted to good farming, and the rearing and care of horses and stock; with much more that I am unable to specify. Sheep-shearing there was, indeed, but it was only one item in this full round of practical agriculture. The whole lasted three days, occupying the morning of each, until dinner-time. The shearing of the sheep was the closing operation of the third day.

"Such is the general scene, as far as agriculture is concerned, which is its primary object. Mr. Coke explains to his guests and friends all his processes and results. This is done without form, in conversation on his grounds, or at the dinner-table; and, even more impressively, on horseback. Then it is that you have more of the port of the old English Gentleman as he rides from field to field, and farm to farm, attended by his friends, who are also mounted. From these, too, he invites inquiry and criticism; and from those agricultural in their pursuits a communication of their mode of farming, that results may be compared, and truth the



Richard Rush

better arrived at.—Of the social scene which goes hand in hand with it all," he adds, "I scarcely dare trust myself to speak, lest I should seem to exaggerate. . . ."[1]

Not all the company, however, he mentions took part in the long morning ride; defaulters there were, professed enthusiasts of agriculture, yet who stole away, and spent the morning absorbed in an inspection "of the house and of the library of a thousand volumes, which is a treasure." "During a short interval between the morning excursions and the dinner-hour did I catch stragglers of the home guests, *country* gentlemen, too, who had not been out to the fields or farms at all, though they had come all the way to Holkham to attend the Sheep-shearing.—And no wonder!" he adds, in view of the attractions of the house, though he explains that these renegade agriculturists were mostly youthful —"not long from the University . . ." so "that the love of practically inspecting wheat-fields, even if they had yielded twice twelve combs [*sic*] the acre," etc., could not compete with the joys of handling curious tomes and rare editions of the classics.—"'*Young 'uns!*' as Mr. Coke said, in slyly jeering them."[2]

Not the least interesting part of the proceedings to the whole-hearted agriculturists was the distribution of prizes upon the last day. During that day, Coke was literally never off his feet from the early morning till night; the liberality with which he encouraged and rewarded the efforts of all successful competitors knew no stint. According to his invariable custom, besides the prizes given by him to the best shepherds and

[1] *The Court of London*, by Richard Rush, ed. by his son, Benjamin Rush (1873), pp. 99–100. [2] *Op. cit.*, pp. 101–2.

ploughmen, and to farmers from every part of the kingdom for successful exhibits, prizes were still awarded by him for the invention of any new agricultural implements, for suggestions with regard to any improved system of cropping, of irrigation, of enriching the soil, to writers upon agricultural subjects—to any and all who contributed to advance agriculture in a single one of its branches. More than once, when a successful competitor mentioned some fellow-worker as having contributed to his success, Coke's only rejoinder was to give prizes to both men concerned, instead of only to the first chosen. One year there died upon the Holkham estate a tenant who was said to have won no less than £800 in prizes at the "Clippings"; while, as an instance of the manner in which Coke dissociated politics and agriculture, in this year 1821 with which we are now dealing, he gave to Sir John Sinclair a magnificent goblet as a token of appreciation for the latter's *Code of Agriculture*, despite the fact that Sir John had been a strong supporter of Pitt and had accepted a baronetage under that Minister. Sir John, for his part, announced that hitherto in his family the most priceless heirloom had been a drinking-cup which had belonged to Mary Queen of Scots, but that henceforward he should look upon the goblet of his Whig friend as his greatest treasure.

And apart from the large expenditure incurred by these gifts to those who advanced the cause of agriculture, the hospitality which Coke dispensed during the week of the Sheep-shearing was incalculable.

In 1821, each day, at the close of the agricultural investigations, about five to seven hundred guests were

entertained at the dinner which followed. This took place in the Statue Gallery and the adjoining rooms, which all communicated with each other, so that although the tables in the different apartments were out of sight of the rest, the hum of conversation could be heard from all. The principal guests were assembled in the Statue Gallery, where covers for two hundred were laid at two long tables, presided over respectively by the Duke of Bedford and Coke. An amiable Tory describes how—

> High o'er the rest, majestically great,
> With wisdom weighty and with power elate,
> Sits Father Coke—his ample forehead spread,
> Whilst clouds of powder float around his head;
> The fire of genius beaming from his eye,
> Grace in his action, wit in his reply,
> He rules the crowds that feast at his expense—
> With words all meaning, and with sound all sense![1]

Though the same Tory waxes eloquent over the viands which were set before the guests:—

> "The vastness and profusion of the dishes irresistibly reminded the spectator of the rude and unbounded magnificence of the *olden time*. Never since the visit of Queen Elizabeth to Kenilworth had there been witnessed a scene of such liberal and such lavish hospitality. Who can say that some centuries hence another '*Author of Waverley*' may not arise, whose descriptive pen shall do justice to the event, and record the large expenditure of that day, as a proof of the degeneracy of the future, and the superiority of the present times?"[2]

[1] *Holkham, a poem, dedicated, without permission, to Joseph Hume, Esq., M.P.A.S.S.* Printed for Williams Sams, No. 1 St. James's Street (1822), pp. 5–6.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. ix. (preface).

In short, as Rush explains more briefly, the dinner "was sumptuous," and in the centre of the table at which Coke was seated was the splendid silver urn which had been presented to him as a token of gratitude by the farmers of Norfolk. As soon as the meal was over, Coke rose, and having bidden his guests welcome to Holkham, gave his first toast—"Live, and let live!" Instantly this was passed from table to table, and the thunders of applause which followed could be heard rolling through the house in a manner which, to the Americans at least, was singularly stirring and impressive.

"These shouts," Rush relates, "echoing through the apartments of this stately mansion, standing alone in the midst of a rural domain, and heard somewhat faintly in our statue gallery from the distant rooms, but still *heard*, had something in them to fill the fancy. The whole scene seemed to recall baronial days, the 'moated ramparts, embattled towers and trophied halls.' It brought back the remembrance of feudal banquets, as if here seen in alliance with modern freedom and refinements. So at least I felt. Others may have less of this feeling, or none of it, unless my own countrymen present. Perhaps more of the romance of English history is apt to linger about an American than an Englishman."[1]

Immediately there was a rush for the Statue Gallery, in order to hear the speeches which followed. As many as could procure seats remained; the others clustered in the doorways or returned to their separate rooms, where they had a series of speeches and toasts to them-

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 104–5.

selves. The proceedings in the Statue Gallery—with a condensed report of which R. N. Bacon succeeded in filling a good-sized book—invariably occupied several hours. Besides many annual toasts which were popular, such as "A Fine Fleece and a Fat Carcase," "The Plough, and a Good Use of it," etc., a tribute was invariably paid to Coke's endeavours to enclose all waste lands, which the farmers irreverently toasted as "The Enclosing of all WAISTS." Further, when a toast was popular it was repeated or cheered with untiring energy. The *Iris* records how, one year, Miss Coke's health was hurrahed twenty-four times. Thus it is not altogether surprising that the Tory guest sarcastically exclaims :—

> They found thy viands good, thy draughts divine,
> And much indulged in wit, but more in wine ;
> Deeply they drank who seldom drank before,
> And they who often drank, now drank the more.
> . . . . . .
> Then who can wonder if forbidden bliss
> Should tempt e'en Whigs in such an hour as this?
> Or what avails it now in rhyme to tell
> How Anson strove to rise, but striving fell?[1]

In spite of a few *contretemps* of this description, however, the speeches which accompanied these toasts were both interesting and amusing. Men of such varied rank and outlook, of such different professions and experience, could not fail to have something to relate which presented new ideas to the majority ; though often the anecdotes with which they enlivened the company were not more appreciated than the efforts of those

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 23.

speakers who were unconsciously humorous. Not the least popular part of the proceedings was the speeches made in broken English by the foreigners, or, as has before been mentioned, the oracular utterances of Lord Erskine. The farmers, too, whom Coke encouraged to express their opinions freely, were often, wholly unsuspected by themselves, a source of diversion to an audience who, we are informed, were "in high good humour" after their ample meal.

The shortest speech on record at the Clippings is said to be the following. A certain farmer was observed to be making efforts to rise to his feet, but each time was hustled back by his companions, who, probably on the principle that a prophet is without honour in his own country, recommended him to hold his tongue. "Sit down, will 'ee!" they reiterated firmly, when suddenly Coke noticed the little commotion, and interfered. "I see," he said, "that good fellow has something to say to us; pray let him speak!" The man, thus encouraged, rose triumphantly to his feet and hammered upon the table. Profound silence at once reigned through the room, and he delivered himself as follows: "Maister Coke, and gentlemen, what ah wish to say is—if more landlords would döe as Maister Coke *he* döe, there'd be less döe as they döe döe!' and amid thunders of applause, he reseated himself.

In contrast to the above, on another occasion a woolmerchant, Mr. Wood, made a lengthy speech with which his hearers were considerably bored. At last, after many sententious utterances respecting the scientific perfection of everything at Holkham, he announced with an air of rapt admiration: "I have

proved, by actual demonstration, that *a yard of Mr. Coke's wool can be spun sixty miles.*" The comments of his audience on receipt of this news have, unfortunately, not been preserved; but the sententious Mr. Wood spoke no more.

Another never-failing source of delight at the Clippings was the friendly sparring which took place between Coke and Lord Albemarle. A certain good-humoured rivalry existed between them with regard to the excellence of their respective crops at Quidenham and Holkham, and in their speeches each invariably drew attention to his own superiority as a farmer, and as persistently decried the efforts of the other.

On one occasion, Lord Albemarle magnanimously complimented Coke upon his successful crops, and stated that, when riding over the Holkham farm, he had found it remarkably free from weeds—so free, that he could safely say he had "not seen a couple of docks on the whole farm." Coke was looking extremely gratified at this concession, when Lord Albemarle added quietly: "I said, advisedly, that I did not see a *couple* of docks, because I did see *one* dock—and that was as fine and flourishing a plant as it had ever been my lot to see! My natural impulse was to alight from my horse and pluck it up; but upon closer inspection, I saw that it was growing in the midst of a field of Russian oats, and as it was upon *Mr. Coke's farm*, I understood that it could only be an intentional product—a Russian weed of scientific value!"

Amid the merriment provoked by this sarcasm, Coke retaliated by telling a story against Lord Albemarle. He was staying at Quidenham, he said, when he went

for a walk one fine evening with his host. They were strolling quietly past a field of barley, when Lord Albemarle suddenly stopped like a man demented, and shouted frantically, "Who the devil's there, in that field of barley?" He then turned in a great passion to his bailiff, who was standing near, and pointed out to him a man who was passing through the barley, and who, he swore, from stupidity or ignorance, was treading it down.

Coke confessed that he was not a little surprised at this extraordinary outburst of wrath on the part of his friend, who was usually of a most placid temperament, and whose rage seemed out of all proportion to the very little damage which the man in the barley appeared to be doing. The next moment, however, Lord Albemarle's excitement calmed down as suddenly as it had risen, and they continued their walk without further adventure.

Afterwards, Coke said, he discovered that the whole incident had been planned in order to attract his attention to the fineness of the barley, and that a specially short man had been placed in its midst to deceive him into thinking that the crop was abnormally tall.

Roars of laughter, of course, greeted this anecdote, although Lord Albemarle, in defence of his stratagem, protested that the short man had really been weeding in a neighbouring field, and had happened, quite by accident, to walk across the field of barley at the psychological moment when Coke was passing, whereupon the temptation to profit by such a chance became too great to be resisted. But he announced himself to have been the victim of worse tricks, and quoted

against Coke a local proverb—"*The old woman would never have looked for her daughter in the oven if she had not first been there herself!*"

At the Sheep-shearings, as well as at many public dinners, it constantly devolved upon Lord Albemarle to propose Coke's health on behalf of the farmers. "I said the other day," announced Lord Albemarle briefly, on one occasion, "how much trouble does Mr. Coke give me in proposing his health! I can but put it one way—you all know him, and I believe love him, and I cannot use any other words which will come up to my feelings!"

It was at the Sheep-shearing of 1821 that the rule was at last infringed which for forty-three years had excluded all discussion of politics. That year the agricultural distress consequent upon the heavy taxation was so abnormal that the speakers found it impossible to deal with the topic of the prevailing poverty without touching upon its cause. Sir Francis Burdett declared that there "is a point at which forbearance ceases to be a virtue," and Lord Erskine said that, if he must keep silence upon this question, "Why, after dinner, instead of a doily, let them bring us a Burgundy pitch plaister and seal up the organs of speech!"

Richard Rush gives a graphic account of how the time was spent after the public dinner was ended upon the last day.

"The Holkham estate," he says, "commands in part a view of the sea, to which some of its boundaries extend. Although the sittings at dinner each day were not short, under the abundant topics and occa-

sional speeches (happily none of them too long) which the festivities drew out, there is yet so prolonged a twilight in England at this season, that a remnant of time was on hand for walks and drives after rising from the table. On leaving it, one of the evenings, Mr. Coke invited me to a seat with him in his carriage. After our active campaign on horseback all the morning, and the exciting scene at the dinner table during several hours, a quiet drive in the cool of the evening through beautiful scenery and grounds, with such a host, was a delightful recreation with which to close such a day, and fill up the measure of its agreeable recollections. We went in the direction of the sea. Still full of the topics of the day, he could not speak but to impart information. He said that his timber, by careful planting, annually yielded almost as large a revenue as the whole of his estate when he first came into possession of it. It was chiefly the chestnut and the black poplar that he planted; sometimes other sorts, and always in quantities to replace, as each year came round, the number of acres annually deprived of timber. Time thus kept the supply, planting keeping even pace with cutting down; a process the more striking to an American, in whose country timber, for the most part, is removed to get at the soil—instead of being grown as an agricultural crop, to yield its annual harvests. Something else he said that may deserve a memorandum. It was, that although banking along the seaside was considered the hardest work done in Norfolk county by working men, those who followed it drank nothing but water; they had plenty of animal food, but found their

strength fail them if they drank either beer or spirits.

"As the chariot rolled on, we forgot agriculture in other and easy talk. He told anecdotes. We had been out an hour. Presently we approached the little town of Wells, near the sea, a fishing town. The wind freshened, and we drew up the glasses as night came on. We stayed a few minutes in the town, and could hear, as darkness was closing around us, the surging of the waters upon the shore. Seated again in the chariot, our familiar conversation was resumed. We were soon in view of Holkham House once more, the twinkling lights showing that its festivities were not yet all at an end. When we got in, it was past ten. The general dinner company had dispersed; but of the house-guests some still remained in the drawing-rooms, some conversing in little knots, others seated at the whist tables. By eleven most of them had dropped off to their bedrooms. The few left had a summons to attend supper in the Statue Gallery. Our table, to be sure, was of dimensions different from those at dinner; but we were headed by our host. Lord Nugent was of the small group, and well able to keep the ball of conversation in motion to a late hour. Midnight passed before we went to bed.

"The foregoing comprise some of the recollections of my visit. They give but an inadequate description of the interest and beauty of the whole scene. Of the manner in which Mr. Coke dispensed the hospitalities of the week it would be impossible to say too much. All received from him the greatest attention and kindness. His landed property in Norfolk comprehends, I

understood, more than thirty thousand acres, and he has estates in other parts of England. His income from the whole is rated, I believe, at £60,000 sterling a year, going higher when agricultural prices are high. In one of the days we were shown all through the offices of the basement storey of the house and taken into the cellars. The latter were filled with the abundant and various stores and wines to have been expected at a country homestead in England, long the seat of that species of hospitality where it would be hard to decide whether the eye is most struck with what is munificent, or the heart with what is kind. I had reason to know that at Christmas and at other seasons devoted to country festivities in England, although Holkham House is not indeed filled as I saw it lately, its hospitalities were bravely kept up. Mr. Blakie, the steward of Mr. Coke, informed us that the annual cost of malt liquors used for the entire Holkham establishment, including the working people out of doors, as well as servants of the household, was £3000. This included the taxes upon it. The enclosure round the park is ten miles in extent. The arrangement and beauty of the gardens, and extent and productiveness of the kitchen garden, may be conceived better than I would describe them.

"As to field sports, foxhounds are no longer kept, Mr. Coke having given them up in the early part of his life. But as for game, that pursuit goes on, as may be inferred when I venture to repeat what he told me, viz. that a few years ago himself and friends had shot upon his grounds during the shooting season twelve thousand rabbits and three thousand

hares, with the full proportion of pheasants and partridges.

"Here I must end my little record of the Holkham Sheep-shearing. It has been faithfully but imperfectly made from notes taken on my return from it. . . . No matter what the subsequent advance of English agriculture or its results, Mr. Coke will ever take honourable rank among the pioneers of the great work. Come what will in the future, the 'Holkham Sheep-Shearings' will live in English rural annals. Long will tradition speak of them as uniting improvements in agriculture to an abundant, cordial and joyous hospitality."[1]

Thus faithfully did Richard Rush preserve the account of some of those remarkable scenes which were of annual occurrence at the Holkham "Clippings." Other writers have left a more minute and technical record of what took place, but to Rush alone it is given to reproduce the past till one sees again that great crowd assembling in the summer's morning, the long procession of eager agriculturists riding about the land, the dinner with its jovial, contented guests, its speeches, its echoing cheers, its humorous incidents—and then the crowd vanishes, and he is driving through the still summer's evening with his host alone, fascinated with a personality unlike any which he had yet encountered . . . darkness falls over the quiet country, the wind freshens, one hears the lash of the waves on the shore at Wells, and, next, one is transported back again to Holkham with its bright lights cutting the darkness,

[1] *The Court of London*, pp. 111–12.

its waning festivities, its departing guests and the voice of their host hoping that "every one within hearing will return the following year and bring with him a friend, that he may have the happiness that he has aimed at all his life—that of filling his house from end to end."[1] In a few graphic touches Rush can still conjure up the past and enable one to realise, as other writers have failed to do, all that devolved upon Coke from the early hour when he assumed the rôle of host, till past midnight when, at length, the last house-guest betook himself to rest; during all which time, as the Duke of Sussex stated, "his joyful countenance and his warmth of heart never failed to be seen and felt."[1]

> "This most important and interesting meeting," had remarked another, though more sententious visitor, when reviewing the scene which Rush describes, "is become quite a National concern, and such a Meeting and for such purposes as the most powerful monarch in the world might be proud to contemplate; indeed the founder and the meeting are alike beyond the reach of every other Nation on the Earth, and I call it one of the greatest glories of the British Nation to possess such a Man and such a Meeting."[2]

Thus ended the last of the Holkham Sheep-shearings. At the time no suspicion seems to have been entertained that it would prove the final one; and no particular reason is assigned for the meetings being subsequently discontinued; but perhaps it may be

[1] *Narrative of the proceedings regarding the erection of the Leicester Monument*, p. 13.

[2] *Gloucestershire Reporter*, July, 1818.

found in the fact that, before the anniversary of this gathering came round once more, a great and unexpected change had taken place in Coke's life. Glancing back forty-three years, however, to the day when he had first inaugurated his little unpretentious assemblage of local farmers, he must have been tempted to contrast that modest precursor of the "Clippings" with its great finale; and, possibly, feeling that these meetings were now becoming unwieldy, and that advancing years unfitted him to cope with the fatigue as formerly, he was contented to recognise that they had amply accomplished the object for which they had been instituted.

This chapter cannot be concluded more appropriately than by a correspondence which took place during the years 1820–21 between Coke and Mr. George Eyres, chairman of the Lynn Agricultural Association. At this date the condition of the agricultural population was represented daily by petitions to the House, and Coke, as a leading agriculturist, was constantly requested to support or to present these representations. But, consistent with his views from the first, he refused to countenance any petitions which he considered did not strike at the root of the evil. Other classes of industry were suffering in proportion to the agricultural, and what was needed, he maintained, was a comprehensive inquiry into the cause of the evil, as the first step towards a comprehensive remedy of that evil. "Everyone who knows me," he said, "must be aware that I delight in agriculture, in the practice of which I have spent nearly the whole of my life; but I cannot give my

consent to any motion limited to the concerns or grievances of the agriculturist alone. . . . What is required is an inquiry upon a large scale, comprehending commercial and manufacturing interests"; and he pointed out how in some manufacturing districts men were earning only 11¾d. per week.[1]

"The system," he said again in the following year in Parliament, "which has been acted upon, and which I have opposed for the last twenty-five years, has brought the country to the state to which I always expected it would be brought." In short, until taxation was commensurate with the resources of the people the distress could not be abated;—to this end Reform and proper Representation were needed for the masses; economy, retrenchment and honesty on the part of the Government.

This determination on Coke's part gave offence to those who considered that he ought to stand forth as the great champion of the agricultural interests, to the exclusion of all other matters. But Coke was obdurate. It was no good petulantly bemoaning one evil and refusing to recognise the existence of other evils, or to attack the origin of these evils. "I refuse," he said, "to break faith with the public who have trusted me. . . . I have been a Member of this House for forty years, and I have never yet known it keep faith with the people in any one instance. . . . Since I have been an M.P. I have never seen any disposition on the part of any Administration to reduce either salary or pension of its own accord. *Ministers must be goaded to do so.*"[2] And he stated emphatically in the House that he almost "regretted

[1] *Parliamentary Debates*, May, 1820, Vol. I (new series), p. 681.
[2] *Ibid.*, April, 1821, Vol. V (new series), p. 31.

having lived thus long to see the country in its present state."

It was this attitude which gave rise to the correspondence with Mr. Eyres, a correspondence which is worth perusal, partly because it gives Coke's views upon the inefficiency of protection to trade at this juncture, partly because of the extremely characteristic manner in which he deals with the consequential statements of the indignant chairman of the Lynn Agricultural Association.

George Eyres to Thomas William Coke.

"Sir, "Lynn, *June 9th*, 1820.

"I have the honour to address you in pursuance of the resolutions of the Committee of the Lynn Agricultural Association convened on the 6th inst. for the express purpose of taking into consideration the proceedings in the House of Commons on the Agricultural question; and I am instructed earnestly and respectfully to entreat that you will use your endeavours to impress on His Majesty's Ministers the necessity of allowing this question to be brought fairly before Parliament and not to be disposed of in the manner now attempted; for the cultivators of the soil have at length ascertained their right and importance in the State, and we feel we have a right to expect the attention of the Legislature to our grievances. We have, therefore, no hesitation in declaring it to be our fixed determination to renew our petitions year after year to Parliament until we shall obtain that justice and protection which other classes of His Majesty's subjects have so long enjoyed.

"I have the honor to be, Sir,

"Your most obedient Humble Servant,

"Geo. R. Eyres, *Chairman*."

Thomas William Coke to George Eyres.

"St. James' Square, *June 12th*, 1820.

"My dear Sir,

"I am this moment honoured with your letter, and am sorry to acknowledge the general distress under which the agriculture of the kingdom is labouring. No one has cause to lament it more than myself; but allow me to ask you if you deem it in a more deplorable state than the transporting and commercial situation? I do not, if so bad.

"To what, then, is this accumulated misery to be attributed, but to the bad administration of Government, and which has been brought down upon us by taxation beyond our means, in order to support an unbounded and profligate expenditure. No opposition of the Proprietors and Cultivators can be of any avail, in my opinion, unless it embrace also that of effectually resisting and definitely putting an end to the ruinous system of administering the Government, by which all these distresses have been caused. There will be a proposition made to-morrow by Lord Nugent to reduce 15,000 men from the Army, which will be sure to be resisted like all other measures of retrenchment by our [illegible] Ministers. Let not the public deceive themselves; so long as this system is acted upon, so long will the situation of the country descend from bad to worse.

"I have the honour to be, Yours etc.,

"Thomas William Coke."

George Eyres to Thomas William Coke.

"*January 19th*, 1821.

"Dear Sir,

"I had the honour of receiving a letter from you in June last, in reply to one I addressed to you by the desire of the Lynn Agricultural Association,

and which I had not an opportunity of laying before the members till the 2nd inst., when a general meeting took place, and when it was resolved to renew our petition to the Legislature for relief; and in soliciting your support thereto, I am desired to make the following observations in reply to your remarks on the subject.

"You express your belief 'that our situation is not so deplorable as that of the commerical and manufacturing classes'; admitting, for the moment, this to be the fact, we contend it is chiefly, if not entirely, to be attributed to that great source of national wealth from whence their prosperity flowed,—Agriculture, being dried up and exhausted. You then ask us, 'To what can all this be attributed but maladministration and taxation beyond our means'? This shall, likewise, be admitted; and you go on to observe—'That no opposition of the proprietors and cultivators can be of any avail unless it embrace that of effectually resisting the ruinous system of administering the Government.' Now, Sir, we respectfully submit to your consideration, that it is no reason because this Country has been badly governed and burdened with taxes beyond our means to support that you, Sir, the great Patron of Agriculture, should refuse to lend your assistance to extricate us out of our deplorable situation, neither do we conceive that you could possibly wish us to embody in our petitions anything of a political nature—that, you must be convinced, would entirely defeat the object we have in view. And with respect to taxation, we are inclined to think that, with such an enormous debt, we could not expect any effectual relief at present, even if ourselves employed the strictest economy. As a portion of your constituents, you must allow us to remark on the great injury the Agriculturists have experienced from the line of conduct you have pursued in this momentous question, for it can no longer be a matter of surprise that those members of the House of Commons who are not very conversant with rural affairs, should stigmatize us as 'wicked and insane'

when they see Mr. Coke, the professed friend of Agriculture, in opposition to the petitioners.

"We have only further to remark that our situation was bad last year; it is infinitely worse now; and unless the Legislature will attend to our complaints, our ruin is inevitable. We therefore call upon you, Sir, for your strenuous support, that our petitions may be referred to a committee of the House, unfettered by any limitations; when, if we fail to make out our case, we shall be silenced for ever.

"I have the honour to remain,

"Dear Sir,

"Your faithful and obliged Humble Servant,

"GEO. R. EYRES.

"In behalf of the Lynn Agricultural Association.

"*January 19th*, 1821."

Thomas William Coke to George Eyres.

"*January 27th*, 1821.

"Dear Sir,

"In answer to your letter of ye 19th inst., addressed to me at Holkham, I can only refer you to our former correspondence on the same subject which took place in ye year 1820. My opinions remain unaltered. I conceive that my Agricultural friends mistake their own interest in calling for protecting duties by way of remedy to the distresses under which they labour, and I am more than ever convinced that nothing can ever avail but a diminished expenditure and its natural consequences, diminished taxation.

"The inefficiency of these protecting duties is no longer a matter of theory. They were laid on at the latter end of 1818. It is now upwards of two years, therefore, that the Market has been all your own. Yet what have they done for your prices? Earlier in

the same year, short wool brought you from 80s. to 84s. per todd. From the moment that the present duties began to operate the same wool has never brought more than 40s. to 52s., and is now scarcely worth 37s.[1] Other causes may have contributed to this, but they are such as protecting duties cannot reach.

"And here, Sir, my letter could close, were it not for some expressions in yours which call for serious observation from me. You say that, admitting the country to have been badly governed and burthened with taxes beyond its means to support, this is not a reason for me 'the Great Patron of Agriculture,' as you are pleased to call me, to refuse to lend assistance to extricate you from your deplorable situation;—most certainly it is not;—but it is a reason for me, entertaining the opinions I do, respecting the course you are pursuing, to point out to you what I think would be the commencement of a better; and at all events to withhold my assistance from measures which, in my conscience, I believe could render a situation now, God knows, sufficiently 'deplorable'—absolutely irretrievable.

"You then tell me that you cannot conceive that I should wish you to embody in your petition 'anything of a political nature.' If by this you would deprecate the making your distresses an instrument for the promotion of party purposes, without approving your insinuation, I comprehend your meaning. If by 'matters of a political nature' I am to understand those just and standing causes to which the public distress is, in my opinion, to be traced, and which are in daily and unremitting action to continue and to augment it, I ask for what, except for the express purpose of examining and sifting out such causes when they occur, am I sent to Parliament? You forget that the trust I have undertaken is a political trust, and if, in exercising that trust in the best way I am able, for your advantage (which you

[1] In 1826 it was not worth more than 22s. per todd.

know well enough is *my* advantage to the full as much as *yours*) I am to be told that I must abstain from 'anything of a political nature,'—all I can say is, it will be high time for me to give it up.

"Let us consider this point a little further, however. Lord Liverpool attributes the low prices to an excess of cultivation; Lord Sidmouth attributes the distress among the manufacturers to an excess of population. These two questions of produce and population are of the very highest order in political economy. They are great powers, and, as such, it has been the business of all the celebrated statesmen and lawgivers of ancient and modern times to increase their amount. Now, if there be one question essentially and extensively political more than another, it is this of the direction of the powers of State by those who are entrusted with them. If the abundant produce of these realms be incapable of [assuming?] a direction by which it can find its way to the mouths of our abundant population, then has Lord Liverpool rightly condemned us to be punished for our industry, and then is Lord Sidmouth wiser than all the great sages of antiquity, wiser than Providence itself, which had commanded us to increase and multiply.

"But in our search for a more consoling and a more rational result, are we, I ask, to be stopped at the very outset, and forbidden to introduce 'anything of a political nature' into our inquiry lest we should expose such consummate folly and ignorance to the contempt of mankind? In the same spirit you go on to show that I must be aware that the inserting any such matters in the Petition 'could infallibly defeat the object' of it,—in other words, that all the interest for which we are contending, you in your way, and I in mine, would be kicked out of doors by the House of Commons, if we presumed to meddle with the interests of the Minister.

"I congratulate you on the new light which has broken in upon you with regard to the publick virtue of that House; but I am not quite of your opinion.

If this were a little local county job, I should confess that it might be better to be silent on such topicks. All that would then be wanting, would be to gain the ear of the Minister of the day. But the great purpose of our present project must be tried by other means. It can only be effected by the general union of those that are interested in it, and when the voice of this union shall be heard, it is my belief that it will be obeyed.

"With regard to the effect which you are pleased to ascribe to my example in misleading ignorant men on agricultural matters, and the great 'injury' you tell me that I have done to the agriculturists by opposing your petition—I have already answered all that it becomes me to notice in a charge so sweeping and so unsupported. As a friend to inquiry, at all times, I shall certainly support a motion for sending your petition to a Committee. I will listen to with patience, and receive with thanks any suggestions by which my judgment may be enlightened; but at my time of life, I am too old to be schooled, and too firm, or if you wish, too obstinate to surrender opinions, amply weighed, to censures which I have not, by any arguments I can find in your letter, been made conscious that I deserve.

"I remain, dear Sir,

"Your most obedient, humble servant,

"THOMAS WILLIAM COKE."

CHAPTER XXIX

REMARRIAGE

1821–1824

Ætat 67–70

FOR some time past Coke had meditated taking more urgent measures to give expression to the discontent of the agriculturists of Norfolk in regard to the heavy taxation by which they were impoverished. In the October following the last of the "Clippings," Lord Suffield issued a pamphlet to the Yeomanry of Norfolk analysing the causes of the agricultural distress, and this he sent for perusal to Coke, who returned it with the verdict that it was both "able and interesting," and that he approved highly of its contents.

> "The desperate state to which Agriculture is reduced," he concluded, "can alone be brought right by County Meetings and forcing Ministers to a reduction of taxation. They will do nothing of their own accord. Would to God that men would divest themselves of their party feelings and animosities, and unite to serve the Empire!"

The Duke of Sussex was expected at Holkham from November 3rd till the 24th, and Coke begged Lord Suffield to come there during part of that time that they might further discuss the matter, since he had

heard that a county meeting was to be convened, and was anxious that Lord Suffield should support it. At the same date, Roscoe and Dr. Parr were also bidden, for Dr. Parr writes with animation to announce his prospective advent.

> "I shall go in the coach to Cambridge, and in another coach to Fakenham, which town I understand is no longer annoyed by the Cacodœmon Jones; and from Fakenham I shall take a chaise for your house. But my going depends upon some business which must be transacted here, and I am making every exertion with a vulgar and malevolent Tory to prevail upon him to meet me so that I may be able to wait upon you. But I dare not tell him the cause!"

As the result of this gathering and, we cannot doubt, of much earnest discussion, the proposed public meeting was convened to take place on January 12th of the year following, when, besides proving the largest that Norfolk had ever yet witnessed, it is said to have been the most stormy. Coke urged the people to coerce the Government into remedying the existing evil: "A long pull, a strong pull, and a pull altogether," was what he advocated; and a petition with this object in view was formulated which he was requested to present to the House.

Accordingly, on February 7th following, he introduced the "Norfolk Agricultural Petition" to the Commons. It was, he pointed out, a petition from a county where agriculture was carried on at less expense and greater result than in any other part of the kingdom; and it was presented by a man who had devoted the greater part of his life to furthering the

cause of agriculture. The petition dwelt on the misery which was prevalent, and pointed out how taxation—"overwhelming and all-devouring taxation"—was the cause of the distress. It prayed particularly for the reduction of the taxes imposed on malt, salt, leather, candles and other necessary articles, which pressed heavily on the poorer classes, and the cessation of which, it stated, would afford the country relief to the amount of five millions, without any injury to the revenue. Still more, it emphasised how "the corrupt and defective state of the Representation is the true cause of the prevailing distress, and that until the people be fairly represented in Parliament, no relief can be expected."[1]

Now, as Haydon points out when discussing this crisis, for many years the people of England had consented to postpone all question of Parliamentary Reform and public grievances until the struggle with Napoleon had been fought out, and their Ministry should be free to attend to complaints. And how had Lord Liverpool's Administration met their first humble petitions? . . . Did Lord Castlereagh say: "You are a noble nation. You have freely supported your Government through a great crisis. We will investigate your complaints. We will lessen your taxes, and try to remove the imperfections which time brings upon all constitutions, and we will do you justice."—Nothing of the kind. He and his colleagues said: "You are a seditious people. Your character is unchanged. You show an ignorant impatience of taxation. You are corrupted by the Press. We will neither grant, nor listen to,

[1] *Annual Register* for February 7th, 1822.

nor read your complaints, but we will suspend your charter, we will fetter your Press, and we will imprison your leaders."[1] That was their first answer to the cry of the people; and now again, in 1822, in repetition of that conduct, Lord Liverpool's Ministry refused to listen to the representations of the petitioners.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer held out no hope of redress, and even attempted to prove that the removal of any taxation would be an aggravation of the existing distress. Coke's indignation burst all bounds.

> "Gracious God!" he exclaimed, "at a time when people from one end of the country to another are complaining of distress, are they to be told by a hard-hearted and callous Government—on the first day of the Session, too—that they are to meet with no relief, and that their complaints are to be disregarded! I did not suppose that the petition of the people would receive attention at the hands of this House, but I scarcely expected to hear that doctrine so frankly avowed!"

And he lamented emphatically that there were still "people ignorant enough to look up to that House as a Land of Hope—corrupt as it was, profligate as it was——"

Interrupted hurriedly by the Speaker, and called upon to withdraw such expressions, Coke reiterated firmly: "*Sir, it is well known to be so!*" and being again requested to modify his remarks, he pointed out that "if his language was unparliamentary, his statements were correct. That he knew he was warm,

[1] *Life of Ben. R. Haydon*, by Tom Taylor (1853), Vol. II, p. 314.

and it was natural he should be so!"[1] with which concession the House was apparently obliged to be satisfied, for urging Whigs and Tories to unite for the good of their country, he proceeded to deliver an extremely violent Reform speech. So vehement was he that the *Annual Register* remarks disapprovingly how "the venerable gentleman was more than once called to order by the Speaker." "I observe," Roscoe wrote to Coke a few days later, "that you have not hesitated to speak out in the House in such a manner as seems to have surprised, no less than provoked them. I much doubt whether any one else would have ventured on such a step, and if he had, he would not, perhaps, have brought himself off without giving up a single inch!"

With all his attention and energy absorbed, apparently, by this mighty question of Reform, four days later an event occurred which brought to pass an unexpected change in Coke's private life.

For some time past he had been extremely anxious that his nephew and heir, William Coke, should marry. With this object in view, it was natural that his thoughts should turn towards the daughter of his old friend, Lord Albemarle. Lady Anne, Coke's godchild, had been so constantly at Holkham that she was like a daughter of the house. Just grown up, bright, wilful and determined, she was extremely fascinating, and Coke was very fond of her. He and Lord Albemarle talked the matter over, and both were agreed that a marriage between William and Lady Anne was very desirable, and that they would use their joint en-

[1] *Morning Chronicle*, February 8th; also *Annual Register*, 1822.

deavours to bring it about. But an insurmountable difficulty lay with the young people themselves, who, upon the subject being broached to them respectively scouted the suggestion. William, it is said, flatly refused ever to contemplate it; and one story runs that Lady Anne having declined to listen when her father discussed the project, Lord Albemarle begged Coke to try his powers of persuasion. Accordingly, Coke reasoned with his god-daughter, and at last, finding that his arguments made no impression, he said, "My dear Anne, you know you are like my own child; I wish that you would tell me all that is in your heart—if there is anybody else you care for?" To which Lady Anne replied: "No one—except yourself."

Whatever the truth of this story, unsuspected by Coke, Lady Anne was devoted to him, and would kiss the gloves he had worn, the book he had touched, the chair he had sat in. At length Miss Coke, seeing that she was never happy away from Holkham and was always planning some excuse to come there, said to her: "Tell me, Anne, is it William, or is it my father?" Lady Anne's reply was: "It is Mr. Coke. I would marry William to be always near dear Mr. Coke." Apparently, from the following undated letter, she had confided in her grandmother, Lady de Clifford.

Lady de Clifford to Lady Anne Keppel.

"My dearest Anne,

"I have received your kind and affectionate letter to-day, and have to tell you that dear Mr. Coke set an hour with me yesterday and talked all the time of his favourite Anne, and desired me to tell

you that if ever you were in any difficulty, to apply to him, for that he loves you as if you were his own Child; do not show this letter to anybody, but burn it directly, etc.

"God bless you, my dearest Girl.

"Ever your affectionate grand-mother,

"S. DE CLIFFORD."

But the letter must have been too precious to burn, since, to this day, it is in existence, so tenderly preserved that it might have but this moment quitted the hand of the writer. Yet the statement that Mr. Coke looked upon Lady Anne as if she "were his own child" was, no doubt, the precise truth; genuinely attached as he was to her, it is probable that he would have continued to regard her in the light of a dearly loved daughter, if an event had not occurred which brought affairs to a crisis, and caused Lady Anne to claim the promise quoted in Lady de Clifford's letter.

Lord Albemarle, himself, decided to marry again, and chose, as his second wife, Charlotte Hunloke,[2] Coke's niece. "The lady is forty-five," commented Creevey; "which is all very well if he *must* be married."[1] But the thought of her father's remarriage threw Lady Anne into despair, for she foresaw that, with a stepmother presiding at Quidenham, the intimacy between that house and Holkham would probably be lessened, as she would no longer have the same excuse for spending so much of the year with Miss Coke. The wedding was arranged to take place on February 11th, 1822, in London, when the Bishop

[1] *Creevey Papers*, Vol. II, p. 33.

[2] Daughter of Margaret Coke (sister to T. W. Coke), who married Sir Henry Hunloke, Bart., in 1774.

of Norwich was to officiate. Coke was present at it, and, after the ceremony was over, Lady Anne was gazing despondently out of the window, when she saw his coach waiting at the door to take him back to Norfolk. She told Miss Coke afterwards, "I saw the coach, and I thought if Mr. Coke once gets into that, all is over—and I rushed downstairs!" In deep distress, as she herself related, crying bitterly, she went to Coke, and the result was a foregone conclusion; the marriage was forthwith arranged.

The news created the greatest excitement. That Coke should be proposing to marry Lord Albemarle's young daughter, while Lord Albemarle figured gaily as the bridegroom of Coke's niece, suggested an element of comedy which the public did not fail to make the most of. "Mr. Coke's absurd marriage to Lady Anne Keppel, fifty years younger than himself, is the general topic of conversation," remarked a gossip a few days later,[1] and many were the versions of the romance which got abroad. One report stated that Coke had urged his nephew to marry Lady Anne, and that, upon William's refusal, Coke had exclaimed passionately, "By God, if you won't marry her, I will marry her myself!" A still more picturesque tale related that William, having realised his folly, posted up to town at break-neck speed to propose to the lady, only to discover that she was already engaged to his uncle. Finally a rumour asserted that the wedding was to take place at St. James's Church, where Coke had been christened, and that the wedding party were to *walk* in procession through the streets.[2]

[1] *The Pope of Holland House*, by Lady Seymour, p. 244. [2] *Ibid.*

Needless to say, none of these statements contained a grain of truth; but the wedding followed the engagement with unusual rapidity. A fortnight after Lord Albemarle's marriage, on February 26th, Coke and Lady Anne dined at the Duke of Norfolk's with a few intimate friends, among whom were the Duke of Sussex, the Bishop of Norwich, Roger Wilbraham and Mr. and Lady Sophia Macdonald. After dinner they adjourned to Lord Albemarle's house in St. James's Square, where the ceremony took place in the drawing-room, the Bishop of Norwich again officiating. They then left for Lady de Clifford's house, Dudley Grove, Paddington, where the honeymoon was to be spent, apparently enlivened by a large house-party, since the newspapers relate how "a select party of fashionables, among others the Dukes of Sussex and Norfolk, were invited to meet them."

Paddington at this date was a rural village with a few old houses on each side of the Edgware Road. The picturesque Green, with its group of magnificent elms, the little Gothic church, overgrown with ivy, the quaint old alehouses, screened by high elms,—each with its long straggling sign-post reaching across the road, and with long troughs adjacent for watering the hay-waggons on their way to and from market,—all formed a scene in which painters delightsd, and the beauty of which inspired George Morland to make his first studies from nature.

From this country retreat, on March 4th, Coke wrote to Dr. Parr in response to the congratulations of the latter: "I never doubted," he said, "the pleasure it would give you to hear of my union with a most lovely

Anne Lucy Gaye Anson
Rosebery

ANNE ANSON, SECOND WIFE OF THE FOURTH EARL OF ROSEBERY

and amiable young woman, to whom I have been attached, and she to me, for some years." It was but natural, however, that amongst those who had Coke's happiness most at heart, the wisdom of a marriage which presented such an unusual disparity of years should be anxiously called in question. This disparity was less apparent, in that Coke, strong, vigorous, and upright, was of exceptionally youthful appearance, and seemed to be in the prime of life, rather than approaching his seventieth year. But the fact remained that the young bride, so fair that she was known by the name of the "White Lily," was but eighteen years of age, while Coke was sixty-eight; and the union of a man of mature years and serious aims with a pretty, wayward and impulsive girl, fifty years his junior, could not but be viewed by those nearest to him with distinct apprehension. The Tories, indeed, endeavoured to throw public ridicule upon it, calling it the "Marriage of Seventeen and Seventy"; but since Coke had, by now, been a widower twenty-one years—Lady Anne[1] having been born three years after the death of his first wife, and being seven years younger than his granddaughter, Anne Anson[2]—the letters of congratulation, even from his friends, which the news elicited, show an amusing diversity of opinion.[3]

[1] Born June 16th, 1803.

[2] Afterwards Lady Rosebery.

[3] Lady Anne was the original of Lady Glenmore in *Almacks*, a novel published by Saunders and Otley, 1826 (written anonymously by Marianne Hudson), in which William Coke figured as Lord Hazlemere, Lord Glenmore's nephew, who was in constant attendance upon the youthful bride, Lady Glenmore.

Lady de Clifford to Thomas William Coke.

"BRIGHTON, *February*, 1822.

"My dear Mr. Coke,

"I cannot say how happy I am in your Marriage with my Grand Daughter Anne, as I am certain it will make her happy, and am certain she will do all in her power to make you so, in which I feel she will succeed, as indeed she is so very sincerely attached to you. I intend on account of this Event to be in Town on Saturday Evening.

"Ever, dear Mr. Coke,
"Most truly and affectionately yours,
"S. DE CLIFFORD."

Lord Sherborne to T. W. Coke.

"SHERBORNE PARK, *February 19th*, 1822.

"My dear Uncle,

"It would ill become me to laugh, and I cannot cry at a measure you meditate for your Happiness, of which you must be the best judge. You may be assured Mary and I sincerely wish you all you anticipate.

"We shall be happy in paying our *Duty;* but don't you think, since my head has become so bald, it will be as well not to introduce me as a Nephew? If I am to be shown up in that character, send me down some Macassar Oil, that I may make the best appearance I can.

"With Mary's love and best wishes,
"I am, my dear Sir,
"Most affectionately yours,
"SHERBORNE."

William Roscoe to T. W. Coke.

"Liverpool, 13*th March*, 1822.

"My dear Sir,

"May I beg leave to add my sincerest congratulations with those of your other friends, to yourself and Lady Anne Coke on your recent marriage, and to express my most earnest wishes that it may be attended with every happiness that such a state can possibly afford?

"I certainly was not in the least aware on my last visit to Holkham of the reasons of the conversations to which I was so nearly placed at table; otherwise I should not have interfered so impertinently with my advice to you to attend to the good things before you, whilst you had so much better an object at your side. Should I ever have the happiness of paying another visit to that hospitable place, I hope Lady Anne will forgive me for what is past, and not think me *too great a Scholar* for her to talk with, as I assure you my opinion of my own sagacity is not much improved by what has occurred.

"We are all here delighted with Mr. Macdonald's speech. Lord Londonderry's apology was as pitiful as his attack was insolent.

"Believe me, my dear Friend,
"Ever faithfully and affectionately yours,
"W. Roscoe."

But one of Coke's friends maintained a marked silence upon the subject of his second marriage. Lady Spencer,[1] who had always professed the liveliest friendship for him, and had always delighted him by her Irish wit and grace of manner, sent no letter of con-

[1] George John, second Earl Spencer, soon after attaining his majority, married Lavinia Bingham, eldest daughter of Lord Lucan, an Irish peer. She was possessed of great beauty and charm.

gratulation upon hearing of his engagement to Lady Anne, and for three years subsequently maintained a complete and disconcerting silence upon the subject of the marriage. Coke felt the omission keenly, but respected the motive which made her too honest to offer congratulations upon an event which, as she afterwards confessed, she could view then only with the greatest foreboding.

Meanwhile, the steady tenor of Coke's existence seemed unaltered by the great change which had taken place in his life, and he exhibited no abatement of interest in the work which had hitherto occupied his attention. From his country retreat he could drive into town to attend to his parliamentary duties, and by March 7th he was back in the House, as absorbed in the advancement of Reform and the promotion of economy as though no interlude of importance had intervened.

The renewed failure, at this juncture, of a bill to abolish the Salt Tax served to rouse his indignation. This was a tax which pressed with peculiar heaviness upon every poor farmer,[1] and Coke, recognising the importance of its abolition, was persuaded also that on this, as on many previous occasions, unfair pressure had been resorted to, to secure the defeat of an attempt to lessen taxation. Announcing warmly that neither the petition from Norfolk nor petitions from every county in England could avail against the inherent corruption of the Government, he made a personal

[1] The salting a pig, which previous to the removal of this tax cost a poor man the sum of eighteen shillings, subsequently cost him only the sum of one shilling (*Notebook of the Rev. the Hon. T. Keppel*).

attack on Lord Londonderry,[1] stating how, in order to defeat the bill, sixty or seventy placemen had voted at the express command of the latter, and how, whenever any reduction of taxation was proposed, "the noble Marquis marched up with his band of placemen and pensioners to overthrow the proposition." Lord Londonderry replied by making the apology which Roscoe describes as "pitiful" in his letter of March 13th, and he further endeavoured to parry Coke's onslaught by a feeble retort, "that after what had recently passed immediately affecting the domestic happiness of the honourable Member, he had hoped to find him in a better temper!"

The bad taste of this rejoinder—which Roscoe designates as "insolent"—was sufficiently apparent to all present; but Coke appears to have been equal to the occasion. Haydon relates:—

> "I asked Mr. Coke if it was true that Lord Castlereagh had the bad taste to allude to his marriage in the House. Mr. Coke said that soon after his marriage, on some important Whig question, he made a point of being present at the division, and that Lord Castlereagh pointedly alluded to his being present in the House during his honeymoon. Mr. Coke said: 'I replied that if I had not proved myself a better man than Lord Castlereagh had ever done, I should be a very poor one indeed.' As Lord Castlereagh was known to be constitutionally feeble in certain points, the House laughed very heartily."[2]

But so long as the question of Reform remained in abeyance, the hope expressed by Lord Londonderry

[1] Lord Castlereagh succeeded his father as second Marquis of Londonderry in 1821.

[2] *Haydon's Correspondence and Table Talk* (1876), Vol. II, p. 378.

was destined to be ungratified; and throughout that session—the last which Lord Londonderry ever witnessed[1]—he was fated to hear again many a biting allusion from Coke to that "ignorant impatience of taxation" with which he had accredited the British people.[2] On no occasion did Coke spare the House an expression of his views or moderate his invectives in exposing the "tyrannical corruption" of the Ministers. In April he presented another petition for the reduction of taxation, announcing "that in some way the public voice would at last make itself heard, though not through that corrupt House. . . . The county of Norfolk, he was proud to say, had set the first example of petitioning Parliament," but "he hoped to hear the public voice resound on this subject from all quarters of the country"; while in June he presented another petition for Reform, calling upon his colleagues yet again to check the "enormous sums of national money squandered to maintain a corrupt Ministerial majority"—a petition which the Ministry strove to reject on the plea that the language in which it was couched was "most insulting." In short, in this, the ultimate struggle of Coke's parliamentary career, all his energies were concentrated upon the issue, till his opponents grew to dread the plainness of speech which the Speaker failed to check, and which, with pitiless directness, exposed every flaw in their administration.

"Mr. Coke," wrote Sir James Smith to the Bishop of Carlisle, a month after Coke's marriage, "is too good and too prosperous to escape envy. I regret

[1] Lord Londonderry committed suicide, August 12th, 1822.

[2] Sir Robert Peel afterwards made use of this celebrated phrase.

that party should make such men as him [*sic*] enemies. I esteem him one of the best of human beings. I allude not to politics, which I often regret should disturb so fine and happy a mind as his."[1]

But during the intervals in his parliamentary campaign, Coke visited Norfolk with his customary delight at escaping from the strain of political warfare. About the third week in March, he and Lady Anne decided to leave Dudley Grove, on their first visit to Holkham since their marriage; and on March 16th, a few days previous to starting on their journey, they went to a small dinner-party of twelve, at Lady Anson's. Amongst others, Creevey was present, and, never having met Lady Anne during his visits to Norfolk, he was, no doubt, extremely curious to see the young bride about whom there had been so much excitement. He relates:—

"I sat next to Lady Anson at her desire. I was introduced both by her and Coke to Lady Anne, who, to my mind, has neither beauty, nor elegance, nor manner to recommend her, and if ever I saw a *deep one,* it is her. On the other hand, I never saw more perfect behaviour than that of all the ladies of the family. Miss Coke I thought was *low.* We had, however, a remarkably merry dinner, and I went upstairs afterwards and staid till eleven. I kept up a kind of running fire upon Coke, and Ly. Anson kept her hand upon my arm all the time, pinching me and keeping me in check when she thought I was going too far. . . . She, Lady Anson, is as good as ever she can be, and I liked her very much indeed, as I always do, and I am to dine with her again very soon. The Bride and Groom are going to Norfolk, so that I suppose at the Duke of Sussex's and the

[1] *Memoirs and Correspondence of Sir James E. Smith,* Vol. I, p. 605.

Duke of Norfolk we shall have the Albemarle branch of the family only."[1]

Save with regard to Lady Anson, for whom he entertained a genuine admiration, Creevey, as is well known, rarely indulged in a favourable criticism of his fellow-creatures—indeed, by his contemporaries, his praise seems to have been looked upon as a very poor recommendation, if we may judge by a rhymester of that date, who describes him as—

> *Truth-telling Creevey*—now too old to mend,
> Who kills by praise, whose censures best defend![2]

But his verdict upon Lady Anne was, undoubtedly, largely tinged by the fear of a possible diminution of his visits to Holkham under the new régime. In 1827 we find him retailing with great satisfaction—"Lady Anne runs as steady as the Pole to me, and I continue Cock of the Walk, if that is anything!" and we hear no more disparaging remarks upon his hostess; while the following letters, written by two of Coke's most attached friends, who visited Holkham a few months after the wedding, present a contrast to Creevey's verdict.

The Bishop of Norwich to Roger Wilbraham.

"*August 23rd*, 1822.

"Dear Wilbraham,

"Among the many agreeable Reminiscences of a long and, thank Heaven, an happy life, there are none which afford me a more heartfelt satisfaction than those which a visit to this place recalls to my

[1] Correspondence in the possession of Mrs. Blackett Ord, partially quoted in *Creevey Papers*, Vol. II, p. 38.

[2] *Holkham*: a poem printed for William Sams, London, 1822.

The Lady Anne Coke

From a drawing by John Hoppner in the possession of Arthur H. Penrhyn Esq.

mind; but even here, and during the Reign of our mild and judicious Favourite, I never experienced more genuine pleasure than I have enjoyed for the last two days. Nothing can be more perfect than the conduct and conversation and manner of Lady Anne, and she reaps the reward of her great merit in seeing the effects of it upon the countenance of our excellent Friend, who is the Picture of happiness; that He may long continue so, no two people in the world can more anxiously wish than yourself and

"Your affectionate Friend,

"H. NORWICH.

"HOLKHAM, *August 23rd*, 1822.

"P.S.—Your disposition leads you to take a more than common interest in the concerns of your friends; you will therefore be glad to hear that I am on the eve of marrying my eldest daughter much to my satisfaction. Her Spouse elect is a Captain Mahon; his Father was Brother to the late Lord Holland. The young man has a very good character; his manners are gentlemanly, and his temper pleasant.

Not very weighty in the Purse,
But many Spinsters have done worse!"

Roger Wilbraham to Thomas William Coke.

"TWICKENHAM, *September 7th*, 1822.

"My dear Coke,

"Many and many times have I visited Holkham with a willing mind and a light heart, which I always found heavier on leaving it; but I never paid you so delightful a visit as the last; and I quitted you contented, for I left you happy, and with every reason in the world for being so; one event alone can add to that happiness, and fortunately everything is in train for that. My heart is too full to say more than to pour out my good wishes for you and your most amiable lady.

"Ever yours,

"ROGER WILBRAHAM."

One anxiety only seems to have clouded Coke's happiness at this date, and that was the knowledge of all that his second marriage must mean to the daughter whom he loved tenderly. Miss Coke's spirits at this juncture, as Creevey had observed, were "low." She had always been fond of Lady Anne, and she did not allow the turn of events to prejudice her affection; but the marriage was inevitably a terrible shock to her. She never forgave anybody who had been instrumental in bringing it about, and she keenly resented the public comments which were in consequence directed against her father, whom she worshipped. Still more, after having been the centre of her father's affection and sole mistress of his house for many years, her position became almost impossible with a girl so much younger than herself suddenly placed over her in the character of stepmother. And thus at the age of twenty-seven, her early romance with Lord Bury long ended, her proud devotion to her father bitterly wounded, and her home transformed, her very *raison d'être* must have seemed wrested from her.

The following autumn, while staying at Dalmeny, she became engaged to Mr. Spencer-Stanhope. By a curious coincidence, years before, when walking through the park, he had passed Miss Coke and his father had observed casually to him—"There, John, that's the wife for you!" At that time they were not even acquainted; he had no thought of marriage and she was deeply attached to Lord Bury; now, by a strange turn of events, the engagement came to pass. Mr. Stanhope was a man of intellectual tastes; he was, moreover, of a charming disposition,

and he soon won the affection of Coke, who declared emphatically: "There is only one good Tory—and that is Stanhope!" But although opposed in politics, one bond of union, even in the political world, existed between the Stanhopes and Cokes. At the time when the payment of the Regent's debts had been under discussion, Mr. Stanhope's father, in a powerful speech, had opposed any grant of money for the purpose, and the Regent swore that thenceforward "Nothing of the name of Stanhope should ever darken his doors." This distinction, in the eyes of even an ardent Whig, was now calculated to condone even rank Toryism. "You would like Mr. Stanhope very much," wrote a friend to Dr. Parr. "He is an accomplished gentleman, of a most amiable disposition, has read and travelled a great deal, and published a work illustrative of the topography of Platæa and the Asopus, proving the translators of Herodotus on this subject to be blunderers. Mr. Coke is very sensible of the treasure he has acquired in such a son-in-law."[1]

Dr. Parr, upon learning the news, wrote off a letter to Coke which was a masterpiece of ingenuity in its well-balanced admiration for the deposed and the reigning favourite at Holkham.

Dr. Parr to Thomas William Coke.

"*October* 14*th*, 1822.

"Dear and Honoured Sir,

"I leapt from my chair with raptures when I read the letter in which you announced to me the approaching marriage of your justly and tenderly beloved daughter, and your approbation of the union

[1] *Parr's Works*, Vol. VIII, p. 225.

with Mr. Stanhope. Let me thank you again and again for the distinguishing mark of your friendship in favouring me with such early, interesting, delightful information. May heaven grant that in the health and welfare of all your children, the remainder of your life you may be uninterruptedly and completely happy. I do not forget, dear sir, that among the means of your happiness I ought to set a high value upon your own connexion with Lady Anne, whose person, manners, and conversation were to me most agreeable when I met her lately in London. There seemed to me only one chasm in your domestic concerns, and that, fortunately, is now filled up. Let me offer the tribute of my congratulations to yourself and Miss Elizabeth Coke, and of my esteem and perfect good will to Lady Anne Coke, Lady Anson and Lady Andover. . . . Have you read O'Meara's *Memoirs of Napoleon?* I could not quit the book till I had finished it. To say the truth, my pride was often gratified by the close and striking similarity of opinion between Napoleon and myself, upon our contemporary potentates and their Ministers, and upon the ultimate results of many public events. I really heard my own voice, and saw my own mind as in a mirror while I was reading. The main point upon which I differ from Napoleon is the effect of the projected invasion. . . . I am grieved to my heart, Oh! to the very bottom of my heart that a train of untoward circumstances prevents me from going to Holkham at this juncture."

The Dowager Viscountess Anson to Mr. Creevey.

"My dear Sir, HOLKHAM, *November 5th.*

"I thank you very much for your kind letter and congratulations on Eliza's happy prospects; had you been silent, I should not have attached it to indifference, as I well know you would rejoice in and fully appreciate the value of such a delightful change to her. Mr. S. Stanhope is, I am happy to say, as

far as I can judge from what I have seen of him, and, still more, from all I learn, really deserving of the prize he has obtained; and this event has taken a great weight of anxiety off my mind; but the less I say of myself the better, I could not say anything that it would give you much pleasure to hear, for my spirits are at a very low ebb; but my father seems wonderfully happy, and in that I rejoice.

"Eliza desires me to say, with her kind regards, how much gratified she feels at the hopes you hold out of paying her a visit to Cannon Hall, as there are few friends she would be more happy to see. I hope we may meet there some of these days.

"I trust your sanguine expectations as to the result of the meeting at York will be realized, we are such regular [illegible] crokers here, that we seem like the Irishman who was determined he would be drowned and that nobody should save him. I am, however, inclined to hope better things, though I think I must be as difficult to knock down as a Dutch Toy if I am not yet cured of hoping, either in public or private concerns.

"Though not much of a sportsman, you may be living with those who are, and I suppose it would be incorrect to write a letter from home the day after the First Battue without mentioning that 780 head of game were killed by ten guns, and that 25 Woodcock formed a grand feature in the Chasse.

"With my father's kind regards, believe me to be,
"Dear Mr. Creevey,
"Very sincerely yours,
"Annie Mgt. Anson."

The news of the engagement, in short, was hailed with relief by all friends and members of the family, as the solution of a painful dilemma. The wedding was arranged to take place on December 5th, when, owing to the state of Lady Anne's health, only intimate

friends and near relations were to be invited to stay in the house. During the interval, the prospective bridegroom appears to have essayed an establishment of his own and to have come to grief in his domestic arrangements; which is referred to in the following letter from Miss Coke to her future mother-in-law:—

Miss Coke to Mrs. Spencer-Stanhope.

"My dear Madam,

"I wished to have acknowledged and answered your kind letter last night, but unluckily there was not any post. Pray have the goodness to decide as you think best about the pretty housemaid. I wish she were less pretty and less fond of dress, but if her conduct and principles are good, neither are really objectionable faults. I think our establishment will be a pattern of morality, particularly if Mr. Stanhope engages the 'Squinting' Butler and the 'terrible' housekeeper he mentioned to me. If we find one housemaid, with the assistance of the little orphan girl of whom Mr. Stanhope has so kindly allowed me to take charge, insufficient, perhaps it might be easier to find one in the county. I entirely agree that our establishment can hardly be too small at first. It is always so easy to enlarge. I am afraid Lady Caroline Smyth's Housekeeper sounds *too fine*, of which I have a great dread, as I want a sort of *Goody*, but you, my dear Madam, will best judge.

"My poor dear Mr. Stanhope seems in a real fuss and fidget, as he well may be. I cannot help laughing at these immoral servants, and this untoward beginning of his domestic cares—quite enough to make him take both them and myself in aversion.

"I hope my trousseau will meet with your entire approval. Pray tell my kind sister bridesmaids, with my love, that my feelings are too much *couleur de rose* to object to anything pink they may wish to wear! . . . I have been writing four hours, and not yet finished my usually long letter to Mr. Stanhope."

Mrs. Spencer Stanhope, the bridegroom's mother, had been a Miss Pulleine, heiress of the estates of Dissington and Roddam. She was a clever woman, small and dainty, and with hands so tiny that the rings which were large for her slender fingers, would not go half-way upon the little finger of any one else's hand. She had had fifteen children, thirteen of whom lived to grow up, and one of her favourite amusements appears to have been writing out lists of her large family. These lists state in numerical order the date and hour of the birth of each child, the day, first of its private and then of its public baptism, with the names of its sponsors, and, finally, the moment when it was "inoculated for the small-pox by Baron Dimsdale and took the disorder very favourably."

Her large family was a singularly united one. Years afterwards, when she lay dead, her sons, who had been scattered about the world, reassembled at Cannon Hall for her funeral. While the daughters—according to the rigid mourning observed by ladies in those days—were shut up in their several apartments, dedicated to grief, the sons, finding themselves together again after many years' separation, were so unfeignedly delighted, that, it is said, they forgot the unhappy cause of their meeting in the happy fact, and, to the horror of their sisters, the first evening of their reunion developed into a sort of jubilee.

As a widow, Mrs. Stanhope lived for many years at Langham House in London, with her four unmarried daughters, who were somewhat feared in society on account of their cynical wit and the airs which they gave themselves. They each had a large fortune,

apart from their mother's considerable wealth, and they had their separate coach and servants. Of the three who, with Lady Anson's pretty daughter, Fanny,[1] were to be bridesmaids at Miss Coke's wedding, Isabella, then aged twenty-five, was vivacious and amusing, Frances, aged twenty-two, was tall and handsome, and Maria, aged twenty, was dainty and graceful like her mother. As an old lady, Maria used to relate how, when a girl, her clasped hands could span her tiny waist, and how, so lithe was she, that the great amusement of her girl friends used to be to make her dance and bend her head backwards till it touched her heels—a feat which she attempted to illustrate at the age of eighty.

Having been a great deal in Paris, the three Misses Stanhope affected all that was Parisian in their dress and manners, and danced minuets elaborately with the steps which their father had learnt there as a young man. Despite this, Frances used to relate a story against themselves with great relish. Walking one day along the streets of Paris in the very elegant confections of a French modiste, they flattered themselves that they were wholly Parisian in appearance, until they heard the comment of a contemptuous French lady behind them: "Tiens, elles sont mises comme les Françaises, mais elles ne peuvent pas acheter l'air Français!"

Three of Mr. Stanhope's brothers were also invited to Holkham for the wedding: William, who had taken the surname of Roddam on succeeding to that

[1] She married first Charles Murray, Esq., and secondly, Ambrose Isted, Esq., of Ecton, Northamptonshire.

estate, and who had been in the Navy under his relation, Lord Collingwood, since 1806; Charles, who was in the Church; and Philip, then aged twenty-three, who was in the Army, and had been page to George III. The latter was afterwards an annual visitor at Holkham, where he rarely missed the shooting season, and a story is related of him that, in later life, when he had grown somewhat pompous in manner and demeanour, he admired a widow who had been a Miss Dutton. Anxious to ingratiate himself with her, he one day observed tentatively: "Do you know, I have discovered that we must be some sort of connection; you see, my brother married *a Coke*."—"Dear! How very distressing for you all!" was her startled rejoinder.

Miss Coke was unduly alarmed at the number of her new relations, and more particularly at her fashionable sisters-in-law. The bridegroom's description of her at this date says that she was shy and retiring, simple in her tastes, sensible and extremely ladylike, but not without a good deal of quiet humour at the expense of the Whiggery, fox-hunting and farming of her native county. "You can conceive nothing like her adoration for her father," he relates, and he says how Coke's letters to her were "more like the letters of a lover than a father." Her feelings at this juncture of her life must have been not unmixed with considerable sadness, as she contemplated leaving a parent to whom she was so deeply attached, under circumstances the future happiness of which she considered doubtful.

On December 3rd, the house party assembled at Holkham for the wedding, the first guests to arrive being Lady Anson with her three daughters, Fanny,

Frederica and Eliza; and Mrs. Stanhope with her three sons and three daughters. The evening before the wedding, Miss Coke went down to the steward's room, and there received the villagers who came up to bid her farewell and wish her happiness. Out of the money given her for her trousseau, she had purchased for them each a present, and to the old people she gave two hundred and forty warm bed-covers. After the villagers were gone, the household followed, one by one, and to each of these, too, she gave a memento. She had been very popular, and the local papers relate how universal depression prevailed at the loss "of an interesting and much-esteemed lady, the theme of whose praise has vibrated through the county and reached many distant districts."

The following morning dawned bright and clear. At Wells all the ships in the harbour were decorated, and from an early hour the bells were ringing; while crowds from there and the outlying villages started on their way to Holkham. At a quarter to eleven a procession of ten carriages set out from the house and drove slowly to the church in the park. The bridegroom was in the first, the bride and her father in the last. Miss Coke had always promised the Bishop of Norwich that when she married he should perform the ceremony, but so keenly had she suffered at the marriage of her father, that she could not bear the thought of the man who had officiated so recently at that ceremony, now performing the service at her own wedding. By her special wish, therefore, the Bishop of Norwich was not present, and the service was read by Archdeacon Anson, who had christened

her twenty-seven years before. Directly it was over, a flag which had hung half-mast at Holkham flew to the top of the staff, while, at a signal sent from the house, a volley of twenty-one guns was discharged in the harbour at Wells.

The procession returned to the house in the order in which it had set out, save that now the bride and groom drove together in the first carriage. Then followed the breakfast and the long speeches, and at length Mr. and Mrs. Stanhope prepared to leave for Taverham Court, Norfolk, lent by Mrs. Braithwaite, till the following Monday, when they were to start on their long drive to Cannon Hall. The Egyptian Hall and the surrounding galleries were packed with friends and tenants as the bride passed through it in a final farewell to her old home, while without, in the park and through the village, in spite of the bitter cold, crowds had been waiting for some hours in order to wish her God-speed and to raise a last cheer for her as she drove away. And so, with sighs and cheers, Coke's favourite daughter passed away to her new life; and the friends whom she had left behind tried to dissipate their regrets in the tenants' ball and entertainment which took place at Holkham as the winter's evening fell.

But another event of importance was imminent, and the advent of a possible heir to Holkham was occupying the thoughts of all. Yet Coke's natural eagerness for this event was tempered by one consideration. In the previous September he and Colonel Wodehouse had been present at a stormy dinner given at the Town

Hall, Lynn, when, as the papers record with reticence, "*Pointed remarks fell from both parties.*" After which, on the health of Lady Anne being proposed, Coke replying to it, said: "It was extremely natural that he should wish for a son, but so firmly convinced was he that the ruin of the country had been the Tory system, *that rather than his son should prove a Tory he should wish not to have a son at all!*"

Meanwhile, Lady Anne was anxious to find a nurse for her child. A woman named Mary Humphreys was recommended to her, and, after taking up the character, Lady Anne interviewed her several times, and at last engaged her for twelve months from December 10th.

Mrs. Humphreys, according to her own account, on her way out, after the final successful interview, asked the housekeeper what dresses she would require? The answer was: "White, and silk, and, occasionally, perhaps, a coloured gown; but you cannot be too smart for Lady Anne." So Mrs. Humphreys went home, overjoyed at having secured the situation, and set to work to prepare the gowns necessary for her altered circumstances. She was happily engaged in this occupation when word arrived from Holkham that Lady Anne had decided not to employ her, and sent her, in compensation, three one-pound notes. It appears that Lady Anne had heard something against Mrs. Humphreys which had caused her to change her mind; but the woman, highly dissatisfied at seeing her prospects thus blighted, complained to the steward at Holkham, and a further sum of £18 was sent to her, the whole nearly amounting to her wages for one year.

Mrs. Humphreys, however, was determined not to let the matter rest there. No doubt her failure to get the coveted post at Holkham represented a far more serious loss to her than was comprised by the modest sum of her wages; but her own computation of that loss is rather astonishing. A pamphlet shortly made its appearance, "*to be had of all booksellers in Norfolk*," which purported to be "*A letter to T. W. Coke, Esqre., M.P., showing the distress and misery brought upon John Humphreys and his wife and five children by the unjust treatment they have experienced from T. W. Coke, Esqre., and Lady Anne Coke, of Holkham, by which J. Humphreys is incarcerated in prison with his wife and children*"; and in this Mrs. Humphreys set forth her losses as follows: Her journeys to Holkham, £3; her clothes and other items, £55; wages, £21; board and washing for twelve months, £52; loss of future situations, £30; and last, but not least, "*It being customary, when an infant is baptized, for the sponsors and visitors to make a present to the nurse*," also, "*for her to receive baby-linen and other perquisites*, £105"; making a modest total of £293 to which she considered herself entitled!

On December 26th the great event occurred. This time no untoward fate intervened, like the ill-omened mouse nearly half a century before; Lady Anne gave birth to a son and heir at Holkham; and the first time when Coke entered the House afterwards, he was greeted with a ringing cheer, even from the Ministerial benches. "If I were an Englishman," wrote Richard Rush that same day, "I could have no wish more pertinent to the occasion than that the future heir of

Holkham should tread in the steps of its present owner in all things, and, as an American, I feel sure that my patriotism isn't at stake in uttering the same wish."

"The public, in short," pronounced Sydney Smith on hearing the news, "is indebted to every lady of fashion who brings a fresh Whig into the world!" And to one person only can the news have presented a less pleasant aspect: that was William Coke, now no longer the heir to Holkham. Yet he never showed any regret at his change of fortune, and continued to treat his uncle with the same affection as formerly.[1]

But the general rejoicings had not subsided before Coke's political zeal was again called into activity. Ten days after the birth of his son, on January 5th, he was present at a dinner given by the High Sheriff in Norwich, which was followed by a meeting—one of a series inaugurated by sixteen counties to consider the causes and remedies of the agricultural distress. Coke hoped much from this meeting; and, it was afterwards reported, a succession of resolutions was urged by him which, as the *Annual Register* remarks disapprovingly, were "of sufficient strength of tone, and of decidedly anti-Ministerial temper."[2] But whatever Coke's intentions, they were early set aside, and the entire object of the meeting perverted in a manner wholly unexpected and disconcerting.

Scarcely had Coke begun to speak, when suddenly, from the body of the hall, appeared William Cobbett, the *bête noire* of all parties. Springing on to the plat-

[1] William Coke never married, but took a house in Norfolk, where he spent the remainder of his life, hunting energetically to the last.

[2] *Annual Register*, 1823, p. 79.

form beside Coke, Cobbett recommended, in "plain terms," as the remedy of all evils, the overthrow of the Legislature and the spoliation of the Church. "Here," he yelled loudly, in order to secure attention, "here is immediate relief for you! Here is Reform, indeed! This will fill your bellies! This will prevent your beds from being taken under you!" Uproar and tumult arose, till, so great was the confusion, that although Coke was standing not two yards distant from Cobbett, he declared afterwards that he was unable to hear one word which the latter uttered in his violent speech. In vain Coke strove to check the disorder, pointing out that although Mr. Cobbett's remarks "were very pleasant words, no doubt, he would ask—How was Mr. Cobbett able to do for the Agriculturists of Norfolk what the Agriculturists of Norfolk had not been able to do for themselves?" The confusion grew beyond all control. In the body of the hall about five or six thousand people were present, "the most numerous and respectable assemblage ever witnessed," but between these and the hustings, a crowd of "opposing parties," about a thousand in number, forced themselves. Of the latter, five hundred were residents of Norwich who had attended knowing that Cobbett designed to interrupt the meeting, one hundred and fifty had come for the express purpose of supporting Cobbett, while more than double that number had come for the express purpose of preventing his remarks being heard. The noise, therefore, was indescribable, and the meeting was plunged into hopeless chaos.

Mr. Gurney afterwards gave a graphic account in the House of what took place. Happening to pass at the

time, and hearing an astonishing tumult, he looked into the Hall out of curiosity, and beheld an unexpected scene. Mr. Coke, he said, appeared to be speaking with violent gesticulations from one end of the hustings, and a Reverend gentleman was speaking, apparently with equal energy, from the other. In the middle of the room the Under-Sheriff was reading from a large paper; while, from the excitement of each speaker and the clamour of the circles surrounding each, it seemed to him that not one of them knew that the other was holding forth. In the midst of the babel, Cobbett suddenly flourished a petition in the air, of which the five thousand or six thousand persons in the body of the hall had certainly not heard one word. Five hundred hands were immediately held up in its favour and two hundred against it; but the greater number of those who voted for or against it did so by mistake. One gentleman, indeed, was so eager to vote *against it* he held up both hands *for it;* and every one was laughing or raging, fighting or shouting, and all struggling either to be heard or to prevent some one else being heard.[1]

Cobbett, however, announced that his petition had been "adopted with rapturous acclamation"; and Coke left the meeting in disgust at a conclusion which he foresaw would erroneously be attributed to the advocates of Parliamentary Reform, and would thus seriously damage the cause he had hoped to advance.

"I anxiously hope," wrote Dr. Parr two days later, "that the dear little Whig and his amiable mother go on well. Vehement and confused were my feelings on

[1] *Parliamentary Debates,* Vol. VIII, p. 1259.

what passed at the County Meeting." And Coke, replying on January 19th, showed that he was hoping to undo some of the mischief which Cobbett had done.

Thomas William Coke to Dr. Parr.

"HOLKHAM, *January 19th*, 1823.

"My highly valued Friend,

"I have forwarded by this day's coach addressed to you at Hatton two pheasants, two hares, a turkey and chine to garnish your hospitable board on your birthday; a day on which I never forget to drink your health, accompanied with every good wish this transitory life is capable of affording.

"My wife will do the like, and if I live to see the young Whig this day twelvemonth, it shall be the first toast he shall drink.

"You will be pleased to hear that the several hundreds in the County are about to meet to convince the public mind that the dinner of the High Sheriff was by no means the sense of the enlightened Yeomanry or that of the people. The Petition, I will take upon myself to say, was not understood, or even heard, by one person in a thousand.

"That old vagabond,[1] I am satisfied, is in the pay of the Government, and has been rewarded for that day's iniquity. What business had he amongst us but to make discontent and ill-humour? His Petition was nothing short of a declaration by law, of a general bankruptcy and a total suspension of payment. A greater enemy to Reform never existed.

"Lady Anson is here in perfect health. She with my wife unites with me in cordial good wishes that you may live to enjoy amongst your numerous friends and admirers many very happy returns of the season.

"Ever my dear friend,

"Yours most faithfully,

"THOMAS WILLIAM COKE."

[1] Cobbett.

To this note Lady Anne added a few lines :—

"Dear Sir,

"I have to thank you for a very kind letter, and for the copy of the flattering verses written by one of your friends, who seems to feel an interest in the prosperity of Holkham.

"I have sent you a turkey fatted on purpose for you. Little Tom grows very fast. I hope he will grow up a good Whig.

"Yours truly,

"HOLKHAM, *Sunday.*" "ANNE COKE.

In the April following, Coke was forced to present Cobbett's petition to the House as the petition of the county of Norfolk. He did so in silence; because, as he afterwards pointed out, he knew the sentiments of the county to be in direct opposition to the petition. But, having performed his unwelcome duty, he presented four more petitions from Norfolk which disowned the first. "And if," he announced, now breaking silence, "the House voted the abominable and insulting propositions in the first petition—he was convinced they would not—but presuming they did, then should he be more than ever confirmed in his opinion that this was a most corrupt House, and ought to be reformed!"

Two months later he presented two petitions for Parliamentary Reform. The first petition charged the House in direct terms with corruption "and all its base and mischievous appendages," and was rejected as being "insolent."[1] The second, which, we are told, urged Reform in a style "*sufficiently vehement*," yet "*presented nothing so unequivocally insolent*" in tone, and was permitted to lie on the table.[1]

[1] *Annual Register*, 1823, p. 166.

That same month the christening of Coke's infant son and heir took place in London. The old Bishop of Norwich travelled up to town for the ceremony and returned within the week. Coke presented him with a massive silver inkstand, on which was inscribed: "The gift of Thomas William Coke, on christening the infant heir to Holkham, June 25th, 1823, to be transmitted to the descendants of the Bishop for ever as a memorial of so highly a valued friend." The baby was christened in Hanover Square, and the sponsors were the Dukes of Sussex and Gloucester and Lady Andover.

Coke remained in town till the end of the session, when he went, accompanied by Lady Anne, to stay at the Palace at Norwich for the week of the assizes. Thence, after what he describes as a "perpetual whirl," they went on to the Ansons at Lynn, and about the 10th August they returned home. "I have now," he wrote to Sir J. Smith, "all hands at work at my harvest; within a fortnight or thereabouts I hope to be forward enough to enable me to leave home with a contented mind for Cannon Hall, having promised my dear Eliza that I would spend a fortnight with her this autumn. It was our intention to have gone to Scotland, had we not been prevented by Lord Hastings, who is coming to us with all his family the very beginning of September."

This visit to Yorkshire was the first which Coke had paid since his daughter married, and he looked forward to it with the deepest interest. Cannon Hall, formerly the home of the de Spensers, is a very old house, charmingly situated in the midst of a fine park and

commanding a picturesque view. There, in the freedom from work and the quiet enjoyment of his surroundings, Coke experienced a great rest. It was some years since he had entered Yorkshire, but, driving through it, he was again struck with the immense tracks of pasture land lying idle. "Your agriculture here is as deplorable as your politics," he told Mr. Stanhope; but Mrs. Stanhope assured him that he would find neither Yorkshire politics nor agriculture so difficult to appreciate as the Yorkshire dialect. At that date, before the advent of board schools, this was far more pronounced than is now the case; many of the words so closely resembled the Teutonic that Mr. Stanhope used to relate how, when travelling in Germany, with the language of which country he was unacquainted, he found he could always make himself understood by talking very broad Yorkshire; and to Mrs. Stanhope the mysterious dialect which she could not fathom was, at first, the cause of many amusing misunderstandings.

Walking down the park one day with her baby, she met an old woman who stopped her to inspect the child. The old dame examined the infant for some minutes, and then announced with profound solemnity: "Aye, shou'll wax! Shou'll wax!" Mrs. Stanhope was utterly at a loss to respond to this prophetic utterance, and did not know whether to treat it as complimentary or the reverse. It was not till afterwards that she learnt the remark to be simply, "She'll grow! She'll grow!"

Coke did not leave Cannon Hall without first exacting a promise from his daughter that she would come

to Norfolk every year. This was readily given, and as the climate at Cannon Hall was too damp for Mr. Stanhope in the winter, subsequently six months of every year were spent by Mr. and Mrs. Stanhope at Holkham or in its immediate neighbourhood. This first visit paid by Coke to Cannon Hall, however, was unavoidably curtailed owing to the necessity he was under of returning home for the visit of Lord Hastings, who, having left India in 1822 after his ten years' sway there, was overjoyed at finding himself again amongst his old friends. Of those assembled at Holkham that September to meet him there is no record, but shortly after Coke reached home he received a letter from Christopher Hughes, who was now chargé d'affaires at Stockholm, explaining his inability to do so.

Christopher Hughes to Thomas William Coke.

"London, No. 3 Old Car. Street,

"*10th September*, 1823.

"My dear Mr. Coke,

"Your letters have both arrived safe to my hand and to my heart! I cherish earnestly every mark of your friendship and kindness; let me add that the mark of such feelings, for which I am most grateful, is your *first* letter; for Lady Ann, Heaven bless her! put her pretty hand to it, and honoured me with a postscript. It is encouraging to be kind to those who are grateful; and who is, or can be more so than I am!

"I am in all the hurry of leaving town. A few hours ago, and I thought I should be here till the 19th. Circumstances have occurred to require me to continue on my journey; and I certainly go on Friday evening for Harwich and Gottenburg.

"This will explain my sending you so hurried a

letter; you shall hear from me soon and often! In the meantime, how shall I sufficiently thank you for yours and Lady Ann's too flattering invitation to me, to my dear wife, 'and my little ones' (as you so kindly call them) to Holkham? God grant the day may come when we shall be able to drive up to Holkham Hall, and show by *our presence*, how well we knew how to value such a welcome from such hosts and at such a place!

"I must conclude, for time and business press! You gave me leave to introduce my friends to you! I shall never *abuse* your kindness in any way! I mean to give a letter to a friend of mine, a right worthy and honourable man, a companion of my boyhood, and one of that New World that owes you so much! He has asked several of his friends to give him a letter to you: they have shy'd at the thing! though *they* have boasted of your friendship! I never shy anything where I'm sure! You will find Mr. Thomas a most amiable man! He is a Country Gentleman of Maryland, and the friend of

"Yours,

"CHRISTOPHER HUGHES.

"P.S.—I passed an hour with H.R.H. the Duke of Sussex yesterday! I read him your letter; he will not be with you as soon as you mention! he roared about the bad company I have kept and your counsel to mix with safer people! He was very kind to me and will be surprised and not pleased when he hears of my going away so soon."

Lord Hastings' enjoyment at Holkham on this occasion was diminished by the fact that he was suffering from a bad sprain; and since he could not resist going out with the shooters, he made this worse.

"Sir J. Doyle,"[1] he wrote to Coke on his return to town, "perceiving that I hobbled, asked me the cause. I told him of my strain, and of my having made it somewhat worse by my not being able to resist the sport at Holkham. 'Then,' said he, 'I understand that you suffer from *shooting pains!*'"

Chantrey, however, profited by Lord Hastings' diminished activity during this visit to complete a bust of him which he was doing for Coke. It was suggested that an appropriate inscription should be placed beneath Chantrey's work, and some discussion with regard to this ensued. Now although Lord Hastings, in one letter to Coke, satisfactorily proves that, while in India, he had put no less than nineteen millions in the coffers of the Company, over and above that they had any right to expect, he had returned as poor, if not poorer, than he went. Roger Wilbraham, therefore, wrote to Coke to recommend a quotation from Tasso's *Jerusalem* as suitable under such circumstances.

"The passage," he says, "bears upon Lord Hastings' noble conduct in India in giving up all his share of prize-money from our conquests in that country—an immense sum, to the officers of the army; whether it has taken place or is likely to take place, or not, I cannot tell; but the excessive generosity on his part is equally conspicuous and meritorious in him whether it do, or do not; but I must tell you the story from memory, for I have not the book here.

"At the end of the poem, Soliman, Emperor of the Turks, yields himself up as a prisoner to Tan-

[1] Sir J. Doyle, Bart., G.C.B. and K.C., Colonel of 87th Foot. A great friend of Lord Hastings, who fought with him in America. He was known in the army as "Popularity Jack."

cred, and, in so doing, says: 'All the gold that my kingdom can supply, and all the jewels which my dear wife possesses, shall be given as my ransom.' To which Tancred replies: 'Keep your gold and jewels and all the wealth of the various and rich kingdoms which you reign over, for your own use; I am not a seller of men's lives, I fight only for glory. *I am a warrior in Asia, and not a Merchant.*'

"This is one of the finest, if not the very finest part of the much admired poem, and it strikes me as very appropriate to the conduct of the Marquis of Hastings in India. Excuse a gossiping old man, who is truly yours,

"ROGER WILBRAHAM."

Scarcely had Lord Hastings left Holkham than Coke received a visit from a man who was, perhaps, the most interesting of all the strangers with whom his agricultural fame had unexpectedly brought him in contact.

John Dunn Hunter was, presumably, an American by birth. At about three years of age he had been captured by Indians, and was brought up by them till he reached man's estate. He believed that his parents had been massacred by the tribe who adopted him; but, notwithstanding all his efforts, he never could discover any facts respecting his parentage. The Indians gave him the name of "Hunter" on account of his prowess in the chase, and he afterwards prefixed that of John Dunn, a man who was kind to him.

He lived with the Indians till about the age of nineteen or twenty, till he had taken his first scalp, and believed himself to be in a fair way towards attaining his highest ambition—that of becoming a great Indian

JOHN D. HUNTER

Drawn by C. R. Leslie. Printed by C. Hullmandel

warrior or chief. For his captors he had the greatest affection and admiration; on the other hand, he had imbibed a corresponding horror of white men, whom the Indians held to be a very inferior race, capable only of greed, treachery and cowardice, the qualities which the Indians held in the greatest abhorrence, and which they had observed to be conspicuous in the white settlers and traders with whom they had dealings in furs. Unfortunately these traders, in order to drive a better bargain, were occasionally foolhardy enough to ply their red friends with whisky; and on one of these occasions the Indians, inflamed with drink, stole some horses and murdered some of the whites. Still continuing their drinking bout, the Indians became mad with the fiery spirit, and decided to return and massacre the whole party of white settlers. Young Hunter had remained sober, and some curious, inherent instinct of pity forced him to act against the friends he loved, on behalf of the whites whom he despised. At the peril of his own life, he rode thirty miles to warn the doomed settlers of their danger, and thus he cut himself adrift for ever from the companions of his early life.

Desolate and unhappy at his treachery to his friends, he refused to mix with the white people whom he hated, and lived for some time a solitary existence, earning money by selling furs, and wandering from place to place. Gradually, however, he drifted into the haunts of civilisation, and having amassed a little capital by his trading in furs, he educated himself by slow degrees. As he acquired knowledge he became possessed by one great aim. He realised that the

Indians, who were entirely dependent for sustenance on the buffaloes and game which they could kill, or on the fruits and vegetables which were indigenous to the soil, were inevitably doomed to perish before the encroachment of the white man, with his superior knowledge of cultivating the soil. Hunter saw that on the banks of the Mississippi the climate was delightful and the soil luxurious; he therefore purchased an estate there, and determined, by instituting farming operations, to induce his old friends to quit their roving life for the comforts they would enjoy in a more civilised state. By this means he believed that he could rescue the Indians who inhabited North America, between the north-west and the south-east, from the certain destruction which awaited them.

First, however, Hunter realised that he must acquire much personal knowledge of the art which he wished to impart. He therefore determined to travel, and the fame of Coke as an agriculturist having reached him, he decided to journey to England in the hope of procuring an introduction to the man who, he learnt, could best aid him. Having met with some friends who sent him with letters to Sir James Smith, the latter soon effected the meeting for which Hunter was so desirous. Coke invited him to Holkham, and the man whose highest ambition a few years previously had been to secure scalps and to become a chief among Red Indians, now found himself in the centre of civilised society in a quiet English country house.

"We had an agreeable visit at Holkham in October last [1823]," relates Sir James Smith, "with Mr. and Mrs. Roscoe, the Duke of Sussex, etc. I

introduced there Mr. Hunter, a native American, brought up among the Indians, and now going back with the noble design of improving them on the wisest and best principles. If you have not read his *Memoirs of his Captivity*,[1] pray do. The Duke of Sussex and Mr. Coke were delighted with him. He came to Europe with every possible recommendation from people I know."[2]

Coke was deeply interested in the man who had crossed his path by such a strange train of events. Hunter was not good-looking; he was short, and his complexion was swarthy; but his eyes were full of brilliance, and, when interested, his face lit up with an expression which rendered it peculiarly charming. One great obstacle to ascertaining what he desired to learn was, that having been taught by the Indians that it was presumptuous in a young man ever to take the initiative in conversation, he never ventured to speak unless first addressed. But gradually Coke conquered this reserve, and soon Hunter told him of all his extraordinary experiences, of his sensations on first beholding a city, of his astonishment at the first sight of the Pacific Ocean and a ship, and of his surprise on entering London. "I can never be surprised again!" he said.

In the agriculture at Holkham he evinced the keenest interest, and wished to obtain models of all the farming implements which he saw there. But when Coke pressed him to accept some of these as a gift, he refused, saying he would never take anything which he could not purchase. For the same reason, he told

[1] *Memoirs of Captivity Among the Indians*, by John Dunn Hunter.
[2] *Mem. and Corrs. of Sir James E. Smith*, Vol. I, p. 515.

Coke, when he first went to New York, and philanthropic people offered to educate him, he said: "No, if you educate me, you will expect me to think as you do. I have money, I like to think and judge for myself."[1]

His admiration for Coke grew apace, and finally he begged as a great favour that Coke would sit for a portrait which he desired to take to America. Coke consented, and the following letter, received from Hunter on the completion of the picture, is of peculiar interest, when one reflects that it is written by a man who only six years previously, in 1818, had crossed the Alleghanies on his first journey towards civilisation.

John Dunn Hunter to T. W. Coke.

"Warwick St., Charing Cross,

"*Feb.* 15*th*, 1824.

"My dear Sir,

"I cannot sufficiently express my gratitude to you for your great kindness in sitting for your portrait for me. Every person who has seen it and who has the pleasure of being acquainted with you says it is a masterpiece, both as to character and to intellectual taste in the artist; and those who have never seen you admire it as an uncommonly good picture. I am persuaded that it will have a very happy effect on many of our countrymen;—not that there is any necessity for any increase of esteem whenever you are known to them. It is not surprising, however, that, beyond the mountains and across the Mississippi, our frontier brethren should not be acquainted with you. That they should know you as a great example of what may be done by the judicious application of all our talents and all our

[1] See also *Memoirs of Sir William Knighton*, Vol. II, p. 59.

exertions directed to the improvements of our country and fellow-beings will be my great pride and delight.

"His Royal Highness is very highly pleased with your portrait. He was very well on yesterday. I dined with him at the Beef Steak Club. Lady Anson is much pleased with it, and I am very glad she is, for she must be a good judge of its correctness. Her Ladyship's family were well on Thursday last. I called with her to see Hayter's painting of Lady Ann and her fine little boy. Harding was well pleased with it. I think the infant exceedingly well done. I hope yet to have the happiness to see you again before I leave the country. I am now engaged in a series of lectures of Botany, Chemistry and Mechanical Philosophy. They will be out by the first of April. My whole time will be taken up by that; I did intend embarking by the 8th of March packet Ship. By increasing in useful knowledge, however, I may increase my power of acting on my return, and I trust it will not be lost time. One remark which you made when I was with you has frequently occurred to me since and will ever be remembered while the power of remembering is mine. You observed you never found the day too long for you, and never found time lay heavy on your hands. Indeed, I feel the force of the remark, and wonder how many people can have leisure to complain of the tardiness of time. The speed of its flight is the most I have to regret. I never find the days long enough; though I have found that by a proper arrangement of hours one may do a great deal.

"I am delighted with your opinion of the President's Message to Congress. They may have to act up to its tone, in opposition to tyrants and in support of the Rights and Liberties of South America. Should that event occur, I am confident they will act worthy of the friends of freedom and defenders of the oppressed. O how I long in America to drink your health among them! Your example and friendship are treasures to me, and I hope the time will ere long arrive when a seat of hospitality will be found by

your countrymen under my homely roof. It will be my one delight to hail them welcome.

"I have just received letters from the United States which speak much about new National turnpikes; and a pamphlet containing a description of the Country, through which runs the canal uniting the Ohio river and the Chesapeak Bay. The lakes and Hudson's river are already united by a canal 350 miles; the Alleganies will shortly cease to be a barrier between the western and Atlantic States. Proposals are also afloat to cut a canal from Lake Erie to Cincinatti; and when, with these, the communication shall be open between the head waters of the Mississippi and Lake Superior, what a Country that will be! Half a century will not roll away before all these things are accomplished. A friend of mine in Philadelphia has lately sent me a plan for navigating rapids, by a very simple apparatus by which a boat will ascend the rapids with speed in proportion to the velocity of the current. It has succeeded in the Susquehanna, the Delawar and Potomac, to the utmost satisfaction of the experimentalists. Several patents have lately been granted of machines highly important, my correspondent informs me, and says: 'Never was the march of Human intellect more rapid than in America at the present time.' I can have great pleasure in telling him and countrymen in general, that improvements are flourishing in England also, and I hope never will cease till the elements become completely subservient to man's convenience, and misery be banished from our planet.

"Perhaps, My dear Sir, my regard for you has led me to intrude too far in so long a letter to you. I hope you will see the cause of it. Real affection cannot be limited to mere formal thanks. Will you present my best regard to Lady Ann, and believe me to be, with sentiments of high esteem and regard,

"Very Sincerely Yours, Etc.

"JOHN D. HUNTER."

CHAPTER XXX

OLD LIFE AND YOUNG

1824–1829

Ætat 70–75

WHILE John Dunn Hunter sailed back triumphantly with Coke's portrait to his farm on the banks of the Mississippi, Coke received the news that his old friend, Lord Hastings, was appointed Governor of Malta, and was again making preparations to leave England. It was at once arranged that he was to come to Holkham just before he sailed; but although Lady Loudoun contrived to pay this farewell visit, her husband was reluctantly obliged to abandon his first intention.

"An excursion to Paris if time will allow, is almost unavoidable to me," he explained to Coke; "the King and Dauphin have expressed such a desire to see me, even for four or five days, that I feel the call most strongly.

"But I am still more impelled by the desire of soothing my sister Lady Granard under the heavy loss she has suffered by the burning of Castle Forbes. Most of the valuables have perished. My Nephew, Lord Forbes, escaped miraculously. He was stupefied by the smoke, till his dog, by pulling and pawing him, absolutely forced him out of bed, and brought him to his senses. He lost every article belonging to him. A flannel wrapper was his whole wardrobe in the evening."

Thus it was that Coke never saw Lord Hastings again. The latter continued to correspond regularly with him, and directly upon arriving at Malta wrote to describe his new surroundings, which, he relates, he found considerably "out of sorts." A handsome palace awaited him at La Valetta, but so noisy and so miserably furnished that he could plan no accommodation for his family, while the heat was excessive. He promptly moved to a villa at St. Antonio, four miles from the capital, but this he found had been designed solely for the accommodation of a bachelor; the rooms were a "continued suite without any side-doors," and he could not occupy it till this awkward defect had been remedied. "We have been consequently living from hand to mouth with all manner of shifts," he states; and the plaint of the sportsman again breaks forth:—

> "At St. Antonio there is an extensive garden consisting of flagged walks between evergreen hedges, intersecting each other at right angles. At least, you will say, a fine place for blackbirds and thrushes. Alas! the song of birds is not heard here; for everybody shoots and shoots every winged thing. For about three weeks at the beginning of summer, and for about the same length of time at its close there is an occasional sprinkling of Quails; and sometimes there are a few woodcocks to be found in November. But these can only be sought by clambering continually over the high walls of loose stone which separate the narrow strips here called fields. There is not a copse on the island. Every little spot that is not absolutely bare rock is attentively cultivated, the industry of the inhabitants being such that I have several times seen them pounding stones to form soil; from which eagerness to get a bit of ground, the subdivisions of the land are so small that, in looking

over the face of the country from the elevated fortifications of La Valetta, one sees nothing but the accumulation of those walls, and nothing more dreary can be contemplated."

One redeeming quality only the place possessed, in the peculiar healthiness of its climate. But this, alas! was to prove of little advantage to a man who was already doomed. The last letter from Lord Hastings preserved by Coke refers to a "strange present of twenty acorns," which a captain of one of the King's ships gathered from a tree on the site of Ancient Troy, and which Lord Hastings sent to be planted at Holkham. "The shaggy cup of these acorns," he explains, "produces a fine black dye, and there is a large annual importation of these cups into France for the purpose." But no record remains whether this last gift from him ever flourished at Holkham. Shortly afterwards all correspondence ceased, and the lifelong friendship between Coke and Lord Hastings was ended. Broken in health, Lord Hastings died on board the *Revenge* on his way to Naples in 1826, when, according to his instructions, his right hand was cut off in order to be buried with his wife. Extravagant and generous to the last, as in the days when he had given his contribution to the Fox fund, he died in straitened circumstances, and the man who had made the British Empire in India left his wife and children in urgent need of charity.

"The story of poor Moira was not true," wrote the Duke of Sussex to Coke at that date, in reference to an erroneous statement respecting the cause of death. "Sir Astley Cowper tells me that he was opened, and the heart was found to be in a state of ossification; and that his health was destroyed by a hot climate.

It was in hope of getting better medical advice that he was put on board the Admiral's ship to take him to Naples, and such was his pecuniary difficulties that the officers about him have been obliged to make up a purse for the support of her Ladyship untill the month of May."

I have heard it said, but have found no evidence to confirm this, that Coke also contributed handsomely but anonymously towards the necessities of his dead friend's family. It is, however, highly improbable that he knew them to be in any need of assistance and failed to find some means to supply it. Not only the claim of his long friendship with Lord Hastings would ensure this, but, as of old, his liberality knew no stint. One instance of this ready generosity which occurred shortly before the death of Lord Hastings may serve by way of illustration.

In December, 1825, there was a serious panic in the money-market, following on an outburst of speculation earlier in the year. Throughout England a run upon the banks resulted, and many broke. The day after the audit at Holkham, news was brought to Coke that a run upon Gurney's Bank in Norwich had commenced, and that the bank was in imminent danger. Without a moment's hesitation Coke ordered his coach, and taking the whole sum received at his audit upon the previous day, he hastened to Norwich as fast as his horses could gallop, and paid it into the bank, which was thus saved.

Only the year previous to the death of Lord Hastings, his old schoolmaster and profound admirer, Dr. Parr, breathed his last. For some time past the Doctor's health had given cause for anxiety, which he felt all the

more keenly, in that he was now, at length, in affluent circumstances, and the great wish of his heart was realised, since he was the proud possessor of what he had all his life most ardently desired—a coach and four.

"I continue poorly," he wrote to Coke on one occasion. "I have the advice of two physicians, and as they are good Whigs and good men, I give them credit for good prescriptions, and I hope for good success from them. They drank a bumper last night to the health of Mr. Coke of Norfolk." But on another occasion the two Whigs called in one Tory to aid them, at which Parr was greatly distressed, though he summoned his philosophy to his assistance. "My surgeon is a Tory," he explained to Coke, apologetically, "but he is a very sensible man, and he is kept in order by my two physicians, who are Whigs." In November, 1824, however, the doctor was so much better that he wrote cheerfully to tell Coke that "the danger of death is gone by for the present; and tho' I am unable to ride a mile, or walk a hundred yards, yet the vigor of my constitution will probably complete my recovery."

But returning strength brought returning imprudence. One Sunday, in the cold spring of 1825, Dr. Parr, apparently in restored health, performed the service in his church; but afterwards officiated at a funeral, where he contracted a chill. His old enemies, erysipelas and inflammation, set in, and were succeeded by delirium. Dr. Maltby wrote to Coke from Hatton, and, giving full details of this last illness, relates how, as Parr lay unconscious and dying—"in the rambling sentences which he poured forth, all full of meaning and in his

usual style, I distinctly heard your name in terms of respect and approbation."

And thus, consistent to the last, and to the last with the name of his "long-tried Friend and honoured Patron, Mr. Coke" upon his lips, Dr. Parr passed away into the Unknown at six o'clock in the evening of March 6th, 1825, aged seventy-nine.

The loss of these two friends, who for so many years had, each from a different standpoint, participated in Coke's joys and sorrowed with his sorrows, was deeply felt by him; and this period was further saddened by the death of his last surviving sister, who died in 1824, —Lady Hunloke having predeceased her, after a period of mental derangement, three years earlier, in 1821. Other causes, too, about this date must have tended to depress him, for the ingratitude and misrepresentation of many whom he had benefited, even while it was outwardly ignored by him, did not fail to wound him keenly; and in 1825 we find Roger Wilbraham writing to urge upon him a spirit of philosophical indifference.

Roger Wilbraham to T. W. Coke.

"My dear Coke, "TWICKENHAM, 20*th August*, 1825.

"Many thanks for your venison, which is arrived in a high state of preservation.

"I remember when you had any part of your farm in a state of experimental cultivation that did not succeed according to your wishes, that you used to turn your horse's head, in riding about, from that spot, not to recall to your memory or observation what did not give you perfect satisfaction.

"Now, you have met in your life with some ungrateful rascalls. I believe the same rule might be

happily transferred to them—never to think of them; to drive them as much as possible from your thoughts and entirely from your conversation, and thus free your mind from an unpleasant idea. By thinking only of the good men one has met with in life, one gets to have a good opinion of mankind; better, perhaps, than they collectively deserve—and by so doing, one becomes better oneself.

"The finest trait of Brutus just before he was going to deprive himself of life, is, possibly, that which Shakespeare has expressed so well in his person:

'My heart doth joy that yet in all my life
I have found no man but he was true to me.'

He was certainly fortunate in that circumstance; and so will you be in being delivered from the philosophical nonsense of

"Yours ever,

"ROGER WILBRAHAM."

In the young life, however, with which Coke was now surrounded, he must have found an increasing antidote for any trials with which he had to contend. In 1824 a second son had been born to him, who was given the name of Edward Keppel, and who afterwards grew up to be one of the handsomest men of his day. About this date Coke was renting a "comfortable house in Paddington," for Roscoe, to whom we are indebted for this information, remarks in a letter to him how "it is so much preferable to one in the streets of London, and uniting most of the advantages of both town and country." Sir James Smith, writing to Roscoe at the same date, mentions how he had "spent a morning in Paddington with Mr. Coke and Lady Anne and their two fine little boys. There could not be a more delightful sight." There is no doubt that

Coke's young sons were exceptionally fine children. Creevey, writing that same year, says: "I told you of my dinner with King Tom, and of my satisfaction with the Crown Prince (a year old). The latter is really like a Newfoundland puppy—quite as strong, intelligent, and good-natured."[1] Writing in 1827 after the birth of Coke's third son, he remarks: "You really never saw such fine children, particularly the eldest son; there are three of them, the eldest between four and five, the youngest about so many months."

Later, after a fourth son had been born to Coke, the pictures of his four handsome boys were placed over the two doors in the hall at Longford; and there, unsaddened by the flight of time and the burden of age, the merry faces look down to-day on the scene where they once played, for ever laughing in eternal youth.

Throughout Norfolk the people took the greatest pride in the children of Holkham. In 1826, when Coke was again returned unopposed for the county, the papers relate how "Lady Anne and her lovely children" went to a window in Norwich to see the chairing and were greeted with ringing applause. As Coke was carried past the spot where they stood, the old Bishop of Norwich held up the young heir of Holkham to see his father tossed in the chair, and the crowd appreciating the situation, the plaudits redoubled.[2]

Blakie used to say that the great question with which he was pestered wherever he went upon the Holkham estate was: "*Are the young gentlemen likely to grow*

[1] *Creevey Papers*, Vol. II, p. 76.
[2] *Norwich Chronicle*, June 19th, 1826.

up like their father?" To which he invariably made answer: "They are first class of their kind. But there'll never be another like *him!*"

At that date, in strange repetition of the days when the young Digbys and Ansons had been playmates of their youthful aunt, Miss Coke, the children of the latter became playmates of their youthful uncles at Holkham. Coke was devoted to little Anna Maria Stanhope, the eldest, who was a very pretty child—and this for a special reason—"It's your mother over again," she relates that he used to say to her, in the most touching manner; "My darling, you are so like your mother, that when I have you here I feel as if I had got her back again." The daughter, who had been his dearest companion, the object of his care and love from her earliest childhood, was given back to him once again in her own child. "He never missed an opportunity," the latter says, "of showing me his strong affection; every day I was made aware of it by his every action; while, for my part, I worshipped him."[1]

No one professed a greater affection for the children of his old friend than did the Duke of Sussex. Regularly, when the 26th of December came round, a large box of toys arrived at Holkham with an anxious request that Lady Anne would deliver these with affectionate messages to the Duke's godson.

"I hope," he wrote in 1825, when his godson was two years old, "that Tom does not forget his old friend who is most sincerely attached to him; I assure you that I shall always think with delight on the little fellow's buttoning and unbuttoning my coat."

[1] *Memoirs of A. M. W. Pickering*, 1903, p. 242.

Nor was the interest in Coke's youthful family confined to England. "I hear," wrote Richard Caton with satisfaction from America, "that Tom is a fine young fellow and will recommence his Sire!" while from Stockholm, Christopher Hughes wrote pertinaciously for information respecting "Your troopers," or "The fine Squad of Norfolk Jockies!" The natives of both hemispheres seemed to take an equal interest in the children of Holkham.

In the year 1825, Coke's old friend and fellow-agriculturist, Lord Spencer, visited him, and after his return home, Lavinia Spencer, breaking silence for the first time on the subject of Coke's marriage, wrote to offer her long-deferred congratulations in a letter which gives a pleasant picture of the life at Holkham at this date.

Countess Spencer to Thomas William Coke.

"WIMBLEDON, *November 22nd*, 1825.

"A pure unmixed Selfish motive induces me to trouble you, my dear Mr. Coke. I cannot resist the giving myself the pleasure of telling my delight in seeing Lord Spencer return from Holkham in such excellent health and spirits. He is always happy and charmed with his visit to you; but I think this year he is more than usually gratified with the hearty welcome he received, the admirable sport he enjoyed, and the higher and better sentiment of substantial pleasure which he brought away with him, from having witnessed as much real and constant happiness and genuine steady comfort in your married life as he ever witnessed in that state.

"All these pleasant circumstances have combined to make the remembrance of his late residence at Holkham one of the pleasantest he has ever treasured up of the many visits he has, thro' your undeviating

kindness, made to your princely and hospitable mansion. He is never tired of discoursing on the extraordinary merits of Lady Anne, and he declares that her good sense, her pleasing manners, her general politeness and the judiciousness of her conduct and care of her guests, is altogether the best example of an Englishwoman of great means and important station, performing her duties quite unexceptionally.

"My dear good friend, you are a happy and fortunate man; and may God continue to you your many and choice blessings; and you to them—for they are reciprocal.

"I long to see my friend, young Tom, and to find him what Lord S. tells me he is, the most promising scion of an honourable and honest stock, and a future guardian of his country's best interests;—so will his brother prove, or we are all mistaken.

"Now I will release you from further annoyance; but before I conclude, permit me to return you, my dear Mr. Coke, my warmest thanks for the constant attention you have shown to my old fondness for partridges and for the loads of birds you are ever sending to me. All I can say is that you do not oblige an ungrateful person. Oh, no indeed!

"Afftly. yours,

"LAVINIA SPENCER."

Few letters ever gave Coke the satisfaction which this afforded him. He had realised the cause of Lady Spencer's silence, and the spontaneous and gracious manner in which she now repaired her omission was enhanced by the knowledge that such congratulations were undoubtedly genuine. As long as he lived, Coke never parted with this letter.

In one respect Lady Anne certainly fulfilled Coke's highest expectations. She was a staunch Whig, and determined to bring up her children in a political faith

as orthodox as her own. A tale is told of her that on one of her children asking her whether "Tories were born wicked, or grew up wicked?" she replied sternly, "They are born wicked, and grow up worse!"

Indeed, in one matter Lady Anne did not consider that Coke himself was sufficiently pronounced in his politics. The days had long passed when short hair was looked upon as a sign of extreme Whig principles or *sans culotterie;* but although the "Crops" were now quite in the fashion, Coke still wore his *queue* as of old. Lady Anne pronounced this a Tory fashion, and at length taking the law into her own hands she snipped off the offending *queue*, and secured Coke joining the band of Crops to which her father had so long belonged.

Two stories have survived of Coke's care of his girl-wife. When Lady Anne arrived at Holkham as a bride, she was very fond of gardening, an occupation which was thought rather peculiar for ladies in those days. At that time the coaches still called at Holkham twice daily, and Coke could not bear the idea of Lady Anne being seen by strangers digging or weeding vigorously in the garden. He therefore built a sheltered rockery and threw up a mound in the pleasure-ground behind which Lady Anne could garden unseen to her heart's content.

One year, riding in the park at Holkham, Lady Anne had a fall from her horse and broke her leg. The bone was set, but it had splintered, and for long afterwards small pieces of it used to work out from the injured limb. Each time when a piece of the bone came away, Coke sent it carefully to Lady Anne's brother, Tom Keppel, with instructions that the latter

was to keep all the pieces of bone together in a little box, and ensure that when Lady Anne was buried they were buried with her. This was done, and when Lady Anne died, in her coffin was placed a small glass box containing the fragments of bone which had been so carefully preserved.

At the birth of Lady Anne's third son, the news reached the Royal Family under painful circumstances. In the autumn of 1825, great anxiety had begun to be expressed with regard to the health of the Duke of York.[1] Some years before, he had been warned that his condition showed a great tendency to dropsy, owing to his having contracted a habit of sitting up playing cards during many hours of the night. His complaint was an exceedingly painful one; but for a time his naturally robust constitution triumphed. He endeavoured to conceal the state of his health, and was particularly anxious that no one should know he had been tapped. In the autumn died the Duchess of Rutland, with whom he was in love; and, much upset by the blow, a short time after the funeral he went to Belvoir, where he asked the Duke to take him to the vault. He stayed there an hour and returned excessively chilled. After this he became rapidly worse.

Extract from a letter of H.R.H. the Duke of Sussex to Thomas William Coke.

"KENSINGTON PALACE,

"*Private.* "*September 18th*, 1826.

"I have delayed a whole week answering your kind letter in the Hopes of being able to fix when

[1] Frederick, Duke of York and Albany, second son of George III, 1763–1827.

I might come down to your hospitable Mansion, but alas! I have the double Mortification of not keeping my promise and being forced to make my Apology.

"After a private communication with the medical attendant of my Brother, it is perfectly clear *what must be the result*, and this according to Circumstances, may be either *very sudden*, or *drag on for some weeks*.

"I saw him myself yesterday; he appeared in spirits but very much reduced, and a person who sees him every day and of course watches him most narrowly told me, 'I never leave him but under an impression that I shall never see him again.' Under these Circumstances, my dear Friend, you must see my inability to absent myself, and I must request you not to allow this information to appear as coming from me, as my Brother is so suspicious that he would not allow Sir H. Halford[1] even to mention to the King that he had been tap'd, which took place last Monday-week, when twelve Quarts were taken from him. Indeed, I should not have entered into these details with you but that I wish to impress upon your mind how reluctant, although how necessary, my staying in London is; added to which I am not quite well myself, being plagued with a nervous disorder which affects my spirits a good deal, but my medical attendant assures me that it is of no Consequence. Had the weather been favourable, my Brother was to have driven out as this day, but do not rely on these Circumstances. Sir Henry's Expression was—*I have a bad opinion of the case*. The immediate cause for his leaving Brighton was a disposition to mortification in his leg, which is, however, now removed, but not without a fear of its returning again."

The Duke of York, however, survived till the 5th of January, when he succumbed after intense suffering.

[1] The King's Physician.

Greville mentions that the Duke of Sussex and Henry Stephenson were in the next room at the time of his death;[1] and it was under these painful conditions that the Duke of Sussex received a letter from Coke announcing the birth of his third son, Henry, at Holkham, on the 3rd of that month. Warm-hearted and affectionate as the Duke invariably proved himself to Coke, perhaps few letters illustrate these characteristics more than the brief reply which he penned hastily in the midst of his own distress.

"Dear Coke,

"In the midst of grief and misfortune Providence always gives us consolation and strength to support its trials.

"In the next room to my brother who was expiring, I received your kind letter which warmed my heart, for I am fondly attached to *you and dear Lady Anne, and all yours.*

"I felt happy at Lady Anne's being safe and that those whom I love were not suffering as I was at the moment.

"May you long enjoy every blessing the world can afford you is my most sincere prayer. Pray say everything to Lady Anne that is kind and affectionate, and assure her that the knowledge of our friends being happy is a great comfort in the hour of Distress.

"Believe me ever, dear Coke, most affectionately yours,

"Augustus Frederick."

The Duke of Gloucester, in answer to a similar announcement, also wrote on the day of the Duke of York's death to congratulate Coke affectionately, assuring him that "I must ever take the warmest

[1] *Greville Memoirs* (1874), Vol. I, p. 84.

interest in everything that concerns you" ; and the following day Coke received two other communications in connection with the same event.

Countess Spencer to Thomas William Coke.

"ALTHORP, *January 8th*, 1827.

"Your kindness and friendly attention, My dear Mr. Coke, in letting me know of your happiness, and of Lady Anne's safety, and of the additional blessing which she has bestowed on you, are not thrown away upon an unworthy person, for I will answer for it that, out of your own family, no other creature exists who feels so true and so anxious a concern in your comfort and welfare as I do—and a most ungrateful one I should be were it otherwise, since no one ever received more uniform kindness from another than I have from you, my dear and good friend. I rejoice in this third boy; too many such buttresses to a great house can not be, so I rejoice in one more being added to the truly respectable and respected establishment at Holkham. Alas! but few such remain in this money-getting, time-serving country; our genuine old English Aristocracy is fast and soon driving out of doors to make way for new names, new wealth, new habits and new notions. A sad and unworthy change! and which I must ever attribute to Mr. Pitt's long administration. His whole object was to raise Commercial men and to lower landowners and old families; and he had time and opportunity afforded him to accomplish that vile object. But why should I trouble you with *my* Whig lamentations. You, my dear Mr. Coke, need them not; you feel as I do on the subject, and deplore, as I do, that they are useless and unavailing, and therefore it is folly to indulge in them.

"If it was not impertinent and presumptuous beyond forgiveness, I would entreat to be the godmother of this dear infant; but I know I am wrong to hint at

such a proposal, and that probably the responsibility is already taken by someone more worthy than myself; but, if this should not be the case, let me feel that I am in some way closer connected with you and yours than I have been, or can be, except by this old-fashioned mode. Excuse me this liberty, my dear Mr. Coke, and have no scruple of refusing my offer.

"Afftly yours,

"LAVINIA SPENCER.

"P.S.—Every individual of this family heartily joins in all I have said of *my* joy at *your* joy, and all of them congratulate you as warmly and sincerely as I do."

The Bishop of Norwich to Thomas William Coke.

"My dear Friend,

"Among your numerous friends (and all who know you will be included in this number) there is not one who can rejoice more truly than I do at any event calculated to promote your happiness. That the little animal may hereafter prove worthy of his excellent Parents is not only the wish nearest my heart, but it is also the most comprehensive which my imagination is capable of forming.

"Adieu! Remember me very kindly, and believe me,

"Your much obliged and

"Affectionate Friend,

"H. NORWICH.

"*January 8th*, 1827."

Later that same year Coke lost one of his elder grandsons in a very sad manner. Henry Anson[1] was travelling abroad with Mr. Fox Strangways, afterwards

[1] Fifth son of Thomas, first Viscount Anson.

Lord Ilchester, and for safety they disguised themselves as pilgrims going to Mecca. About two days' journey from Aleppo they entered a mosque, and, most unfortunately, forgot to remove their shoes. This led to their discovery, and they were thrown into prison there. They applied to the French Consul, who procured their release; but before that could be obtained Mr. Strangways saw the fatal plague-spot upon his friend. Mr. Anson was at last removed to a house belonging to the Consul, where he had all the medical attendance which could be procured, but it was useless, and he died in the arms of Mr. Strangways, who bravely attended him to the last.

Not long after this occurrence, Coke, feeling the need of a complete change of scene, both for himself and Lady Anne, set off on a tour through Scotland, though, as he relates to Sir James Smith, "not being able to leave home so early by a fortnight as we had intended, owing to Lady de Clifford's kind and unexpected visit, we did not go beyond Blair Athol."

But on his way through England he visited all the principal manufactories, and despite his seventy-three years of age, he spared himself neither fatigue nor trouble in making a careful inspection of each. "In our way to Glasgow," he concludes, "we saw the establishment at Lanark, and returned by Lord Rosebery's, which was by far the most picturesque and beautiful place we visited in Scotland."

While in deep mourning for his brother, the Duke of Sussex visited Holkham as a private individual, an example which the Duke of Clarence proposed to follow, but his visit was unavoidably post-

poned; and meanwhile, on July 13th, 1828, another son was born to Coke, who was named Wenman Clarence Walpole, and to whom the Duke was godfather. The news of this son's birth was announced to the House of Commons in a curious manner. General Scott, afterwards Commander-in-Chief of the American army, was occupying a seat in the gallery of the House, when, he relates: "On a sudden I was startled by the unexpected uprising of an aged member who, not without many apologies for being out of order, averred that the assembly he was addressing was itself honoured by the announcement he was about to make. The purport of it was that the wife of Mr. Coke, who was the 'father' of the House, had just presented her husband with a fine boy, 'a circumstance,' continued the speaker (whose name has not survived), 'equally gratifying to the venerable member for Norfolk and to the House of which he has so long been a distinguished ornament!'"[1]

In the September following, the Duke of Clarence, who expressed himself very anxious to see his godson, wrote several genial letters to Coke with regard to his postponed visit to Holkham, declaring amiably that "whoever are invited cannot *fail* being agreeable to the Duchess and myself!" These letters illustrate certain traits of the future King—first, his great anxiety to emulate his father's example by professing a keen interest in all agricultural operations; and secondly, the peculiarity of the phraseology in which he expressed himself, and which, unlike that of George IV or of the Duke of Sussex, is essentially German in

[1] Timbs' *Anecdotal History of the British Parliament* (1899), p. 666.

construction. The visit, however, was not paid, for the following month the Duke wrote again :—

"Bushey House,

"*October 2nd*, 1828.

"Dear Sir,

"When I did myself the pleasure of writing to you last Sunday, I was under the impression that nothing could prevent the Duchess and myself having the pleasure of paying our visit to you and Lady Anne on the 12th inst.

"But unfortunately Sir Henry Halford (under his care I have been for some time) will not permit me at this damp season of the year to travel, and I am therefore most reluctantly obliged to make the excuses of the Duchess as well as my own. But he is so absolute in his interdiction, I must, however much against my inclination, forego the pleasure of being this season at Holkham. Nothing but the fiat of the physician could have prevented the Duchess and myself from otherwise accepting the polite invitation we have both received to have enjoyed the magnificence of your fine place.

"I must request you will express the sincere regret of the Duchess and myself to Lady Anne, and to ever believe me, "Dear Sir,

"Yours unalterably,

"William."

Meanwhile, Christopher Hughes caused an engraving to be made of Coke's four sons, which he presented to their father, an action which he appears to have feared might rouse jealousy in the mother of his own fine boys, for after returning to his wife and children from Holkham in 1829, he wrote to Coke :—

"This morning I have shown them the pictures of your sturdy and beautiful boys, your precious *Partie quarré*, and they all, but especially Mrs. Hughes, are

THE CHILDREN OF HOLKHAM.

TO M^R^ & LADY ANNE COKE.

A Tribute of Esteem & Affection from their most sincere Friend

Bruxelles Octr 1820

Christopher Hughes

delighted with them. Now, on looking at the pictures more attentively than I did or could at Holkham (I was taken up, as you know, with the originals and their sire), I think Edward's the least like; the others are admirable resemblances. Henry's is himself, the burley Rogue, Tom's is speaking, and as to Wenny, he is thinking of the cockatoo or cock-a-doodle-do!

"If you could see the amazement of my wife and everybody that I should have such treasures—'Well, but how did you get them? Who gave them to you?' —Now, you may remember that you and I, among a great variety of topics, spoke of Dr. Johnson, the Great Lexicographer, the Great Moralist, and, in my opinion, the Greatest Bear that England ever produced! Well, never mind; he has laid down in his Morality one ground, or dogma, with which, both as a diplomatist and a member of polite society, I have never quarrelled, to wit:—Persons who ask questions that they have no *right* to ask, have no *right* to expect *true* answers! 'Who gave them to me? Why Lady Ann gave them to me,' quoth I. 'How extraordinary!!!!' 'Not a bit,' said I; 'why, I am in favour at Holkham, and thank God and my honest and good-humoured carriage and demeanour for it—why, I could have brought away anything I wanted in reason! I could have saddled and rode away with the best Bull or Ram on the Estate!"

Occasionally in his hurried visits to England, Christopher Hughes brought his own "four rogues," as he terms them, to swell the young party at Holkham. As will be remembered, in 1814 Mr. Hughes had been transferred from the Legation in London to Stockholm, where Jonathan Russell was then Minister for the United States. When the latter retired in 1813, he left Mr. Hughes in charge, and so well did the chargé d'affaires acquit himself, that for the next thirty-five years the United States had no Minister in that

capital. Hughes was officially commissioned chargé d'affaires in 1819, and on July 15th, 1825, he retired, having been appointed, by President John Quincy Adams, chargé d'affaires to the Netherlands.

"I have been transplanted to Brussels," he wrote to Coke, "with leave to pass six months in America. My plan was to go to England, leave my wife and boy and girl with you, if you would have given them house room, for about three weeks. Would you have sheltered them? Aye, as sure as I live, you would have given them a welcome! In those three weeks I should have gone over to Brussels, presented my letters of credence, gone through the ceremony of presentation to the King and introduction to my new place; returned to England, and embarked at Liverpool for America, to return next April or May. The children of the deep and of enterprise, we Yankees don't feel at all appalled at crossing the Atlantic! Such *was* my plan. But last post brought me letters of Credence and orders to stop on a special mission at the Court of George III's white-faced, long-visaged Cousin of Denmark!—And thus my hope of seeing you all is blighted and my happiness filched from me!"

And he complains bitterly how he has been obliged, instead of coming to Holkham, to stay with an old friend of his under whose roof he met—

"Henry Elliott, an old, yea! a *very old* foe of my Country. To me he was a sort of curiosity and a sort of study; you may remember his filching our Envoy's instructions at Berlin during the Revolutionary War; for which his name stands recorded in the National archives at Washington on a different page, and in different coloured ink, and in very opposite terms to all those used in the same records under the head of our Manly and firm Friend, one, Thomas William Coke, M.P."

But soon after Christopher Hughes had shown his wife the print of the children of Holkham, she was destined to see the originals. In 1829, while Mr. Hughes shipped his own "four Rogues off to Brussels by Ambassador's Bag," he sent Mrs. Hughes into safe keeping at Holkham, where he dispatched to her, through Coke, facetiously defiant messages about his interviews with the beautiful Lady Wellesley, formerly "our sweet Madonna-faced widow, Mrs. P."[1]

"You may assure the dear and good Mama of these noble little fellows," he writes with regard to his sons, "that they are in safe hands; and that everything shall be done to do them justice and please her. She shall have them back soon; and as many boys as she likes; for *Crescite et Multiplicate* is the device of my Native State, Maryland, and the practice at Holkham both *within* and *without* doors.

"You must give her another piece of news; now mind and *tell*, don't be perfidious:—I also found a letter from Lady Wellesley on my table; making the most affectionate inquiries about her 'dear Mr. Coke,' and all of ye! Now, read this *aloud*, She, Lady W., is a nice, amiable and beautiful creature, and you and I will maintain this at every hazard, won't we? Huzza! who's a-fear'd? I a'nt, *are you*?

"My devotion to Lady Anne and love to Les Sieurs Tom, Ned and their ponies; and to Hal and that pugilist Wenny. Bless the Child. . . . Here am I scribbling away like an old Gossip in my silk morning dress! . . ."

But while the life at Holkham flowed on peacefully, already at this date a tragedy was preparing in another branch of Coke's family which it is impossible

[1] Formerly Mrs. Patterson; married in 1825 Richard Cowley, Marquis Wellesley, Commander-in-Chief 1800–1805, Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland 1821–8, and 1833–4.

to pass over in silence. It was a tragedy the consummation of which was to take place long after Coke had passed beyond the pang of its sadness; yet the tale may be told to the close, for in the telling surely lies a plea for the sinner who, in her innocent girlhood, was grievously sinned against.

The most beautiful of all Coke's grandchildren was Jane Digby, the only daughter of Lady Andover. In 1821, Harry Keppel, describing the occupants of the schoolroom at Holkham, mentions the two little Ansons, "such dear and pretty children," and "little Miss Digby—oh! so beautiful." The latter was at that time thirteen years of age, and two years later, when her mother brought her out, the verdict of her schooldays was confirmed by society. Of dazzling grace and charm, she was pronounced to surpass the beauty for which her mother and her grandmother had been remarkable; she was brilliantly accomplished, and so universally was she admired that she was forthwith nicknamed "Aurora, the Light of Day."

Unfortunately, at her coming-out ball she attracted the attention of Lord Ellenborough, a roué, vain, weak and imperious, who promptly proposed for her to her mother. Still more unfortunately, Lady Andover refused to believe in the viciousness of the suitor who represented himself to her in a favourable light. He was, moreover, an extremely wealthy man, for in addition to the large income derived from his estates, he held sinecure appointments which brought him £10,000 a year; and the marriage appeared to her a desirable one. In those days a girl had little voice in the matter of her wedding; but whether willingly or

unwillingly, at the age of sixteen the poor child was made over to a man whose reputation was so bad that little difficulty could have been experienced by her relatives in discovering that he was no fitting husband for an innocent girl fresh from the schoolroom. "Lady Anson is going up to town to attend the wedding of the pretty Miss Digby, Aurora, Light of Day," wrote Harry Keppel in 1824. "Lady Anson will have it that he was a very good husband to his first wife; but from all that I hear of him, he is a d—mned bad fellow!"

The result of the marriage was what might have been expected: the set into which Lord Ellenborough introduced his child-wife was notorious, even in those days. The young girl, plunged suddenly into a world so different from the quiet home life to which she had been accustomed, suffered moral shipwreck; ere long, the inevitable happened. Married to a man nearly forty years her senior, she met a younger man, Prince Swartzenberg, who attracted her, and into whose society her husband thrust her, in order that his own conduct might pass unnoticed. At length, stung to indignation by the neglect to which she was subjected, Lady Ellenborough confessed to her husband that she loved the Prince. Lord Ellenborough applied for a divorce; and since in those days marriage could only be dissolved by Act of Parliament, the case had to go before both Houses, and the scandal was great. In 1830, Lady Ellenborough was divorced, and the same year her child, a son of two years old, died.

By the terms of her settlement she was allowed to retain her magnificent jewellery and her ample pin-

money on condition that she left England for ever. This clause, no doubt, assisted to complete her ruin. Forced into banishment, she went abroad with her betrayer, whose heartless abandonment of her later in Paris, at the birth of her child, caused her acute pain. Once, in the strictest secrecy lest she should forfeit her income, she visited her mother in England; but obliged to return to the Continent, alone and heart-broken, she before long attracted the admiration of Louis XVIII of Bavaria. Himself a man of no mean capacity, he appreciated her brain as well as her beauty. His attachment to her became notorious; he caused her portrait to be introduced into a painted ceiling of the Triumph of Neptune in his palace, and had her picture hung in his private apartments, which picture to-day is to be seen amongst those of other famous beauties in the Gallery at Munich.

As her position was invidious, the King, in 1832, promoted a marriage between her and Baron Venningen of Bavaria; but the match was unhappy, and finally she divorced him. It is not necessary to follow her subsequent career in detail. She is accredited with having married and divorced six Italian husbands and two Greeks, a child of one of the latter being killed in her presence. But while much of her life remains shrouded in darkness, it is obvious she was, to her misfortune, too remarkable a personality for the world not to make the utmost of every whisper against her. A woman of extraordinary and stately beauty, with the manners of a queen and a voice of peculiar sweetness, with a rare intellect and power of fascination, the mistress of nine languages, besides

JANE DIGBY, LADY ELLENBOROUGH.
From the portrait painted by command of Louis XVIII of Bavaria, now in the Royal Gallery at Munich.

being a marvellous artist both with brush and pencil, her wealth, her charm and her unhappy history sufficed to ensure that, wherever she went, she should attract a stormy admiration doomed to end in disaster.

Possibly the example of Lady Hester Stanhope at last drew her to the East, for she finally went thither, and landing at Beyrout, she journeyed to Damascus, proposing to cross the desert to Bagdad, for which an escort was necessary, procurable from the Mezrab Arabs, who controlled the roads, knew all the wells, and pleasantly varied their rights by blackmail, so that travellers who had paid six thousand francs each, sometimes found themselves "held up" for as much more.

Now at this date Lady Ellenborough, although fifty years of age, is said still to have possessed her dignified beauty, graceful carriage and charm of manner. "She was," says Lady Burton, "far more attractive than most young girls." Her escort was captained by a young Sheik, Medjuel al Mezrab, a younger brother of the tribal head, an intelligent man of pleasing address and exactly half her age. Yet the two fell in love, although their courting must have been by signs only, as he could not speak a word of her language nor she of his. To this final and most extraordinary marriage there was great opposition. The Consul refused to perform it, warned her that she would become a Turkish subject, and even hinted at restraint as a lunatic. She was prevailed upon to postpone it for two years, which she spent at Beyrout learning Arabic. She seems to have ignored the danger that she ran, that marriage in the East, for a woman, is irrevocable, divorce being for

the husband only, and that a wife is a chattel to be thrown aside or even put to death at her husband's pleasure. All that could be done was to make terms for her. The Sheik agreed to divorce all his other wives and to marry no new ones, a promise which he kept to the end. The couple were to live six months of the year in her house outside Damascus gates, and six months in his black tents in the desert, within tinkle of the camel's bell. Even after this the Consul would not marry them, and the mufti officiated.

So this strange being began a new and double existence. For half the year she resided in civilisation, in almost royal state. She dressed in Eastern attire, "more Bedouin than Bedouin," wearing a veil, blackening her eyes with kohl, living native fashion; but drawing, painting and reading in a boudoir fitted up with Moslem adornments, the principal of which was a most valuable lamp from the great Mosque at Mecca, on a pane of which, in token of special consideration, the Sultan had scratched his seal—the symbol of Allah. She was extremely devout, and rode into Damascus twice, every Sunday, to attend the English church; she had an "at home" day, associated with the small European society, and had her box of books from Mudie's regularly; also, whenever she heard that any of her relations in England were going to be married, she sent to London to order them a costly wedding present. The other half of the year she spent in the desert, leading the ordinary life of an Arab's wife; she wore the Arab woman's blue robe, with her beautiful hair in plaits reaching to her feet; she ground the corn, milked the camels, washed her husband's hands

and feet, cooked his food, and waited on him while he ate it. She might have been subjected to the lash of his whip, and been forced to recognise that her life was not her own, but her master's; yet her extraordinary fascination caused her to be regarded with reverence, as something half divine, both by him and by the lawless tribes with which he was surrounded; while her wealth she generously expended in benefiting his other wives and children who were kept aloof from her.

An English lady, who procured an introduction to her, relates how she met her, swathed in a veil and Arab garments, and riding at the head of a cavalcade of wild Arabs—a veritable Queen of Banditti—in surroundings which rendered her gracious, courteous manners, her air of *grande dame* and her sweet low voice more singularly impressive, even though her beauty—all but her glorious eyes—was scrupulously concealed from view. And still her thoughts turned to the life from which she was severed; all her questions were of Holkham and of Cannon Hall, of the relations whom she was fated never again to see. Yet in her strange dual existence she stated that she found a freedom which she loved. Many, indeed, were the stories of her remarkable actions in the East, of the wit and shrewdness with which she managed the escort and blackmailing business of the Arabs, over which she had complete control, of her adventures with Sir Richard and Lady Burton, of her saving a number of Christians from cruel massacre—stories of a wild, lawless life, which strike a curious contrast to the picture of the pretty little girl in the quiet schoolroom at Holkham.

Thus for thirteen years she lived—a Queen of the East—till at the age of seventy-three she was attacked by dysentery. The gentle wife of a missionary tended her to the last, and ensured for her still beautiful remains a decent and Christian burial. Her money, which had been accumulating, and her jewels went to her husband, who, it is said, mourned her loss inconsolably. So ended the career of a woman who, whatever her failings, was certainly, in brain, beauty and fascination, one of the most remarkable personalities of her century.

On the fly-leaf of her Bible is written by her own hand, "Judge not, that ye be not judged."

CHAPTER XXXI

LAPSUS LINGUÆ

1825–1830

Ætat 71–76

MEANWHILE, in the parliamentary world Coke's name continued to appear at intervals. In 1825, when the question came under discussion of making a provision for the Duke of Cumberland's child, Coke vehemently opposed it. Despite his intimacy with the Royal Family, as in his younger days, he never allowed that friendship to influence his views or to soften his expression of them. On this occasion he announced bluntly that "the Duke had ample provision without the additional £6000 a year, and he should be grievously disappointed if the House voted this abominable and insulting proposition. If they did, then should he be more than ever confirmed in the opinion that this was a most corrupt House and ought to be reformed."[1]

On April 19th of that same year he presented a petition in favour of Catholic Emancipation from the Archdeaconry of Norwich and seventy clergymen in the diocese.

[1] *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates* (new series), Vol. XIII, p. 1048.

For some time past it had been apparent to every unbiassed mind that the settlement of the various Catholic claims was fast approaching. Under Lord Liverpool the Catholic question had been regarded as an open one, but the prominence of the subject tended to divide the Cabinet into two hostile camps—one led by Canning and Huskisson,[1] the other by the Duke of Wellington and Lord Eldon.[2] On the resignation of Lord Liverpool in 1827 and the accession of Canning, who formed a Whig-Tory Ministry, the latter was prepared to undertake not to bring the subject forward during the lifetime of George IV; but Canning, dying within four months of his accession, was succeeded by Lord Goderich, who, having proved himself hopelessly incompetent to cope with the difficulties of his position, resigned in January, 1828, and was followed by the formation of the Wellington Cabinet.

The miserable close of Lord Goderich's Ministry had been marked by the secession of some of its most able members to the Tory Government, and during this Cabinet crisis the question of greatest moment to the despondent Whigs was whether Huskisson would join the Duke of Wellington's Cabinet. Peel[3] again became Home Secretary, and Huskisson eventually became Colonial Secretary; a post, however, which, having disagreed with Peel, he resigned in the May following.

[1] William Huskisson, President of the Board of Trade.

[2] John Scott, Earl of Eldon, 1751–1838; became Lord Chancellor 1801.

[3] Sir Robert Peel, 1788–1850. Entered the Ministry as Home Secretary 1822, but withdrew from office on the formation of Canning's Coalition Ministry in 1827; became Prime Minister 1834.

Lord Eldon was not offered any place in the new Ministry, and he was extremely mortified.

"Lady Canning," Greville relates, "and many of Canning's friends are very much dissatisfied with Huskisson, and think he deserted his principles and outraged the memory of Canning. Lady Canning particularly is much hurt at what has passed. She has not seen Huskisson, but he is aware of her sentiments. . . . The great body of Whigs who belonged to or supported the late Government are indignant and violent with Huskisson, who they think has betrayed them."[1]

A letter from Brougham[2] to Coke, undated, and evidently written in great agitation, confirms Greville's statement.

Lord Brougham to Thomas William Coke.

"SATURDAY.

"My dear Sir,

"I have 3 or 4 times been on the point of writing the news of these vile intrigues, but as I told Stephenson from time to time what I knew, and he wrote to the Duke, I did not trouble you with a letter.

"There never in any age or country was I verily believe a blacker intrigue than this has ever been practised [*sic*]. Huskisson has the chief discredit of it. But Peel and Co. throwing overboard Eldon etc. is not much more honourable to them. You may depend on these facts. Mrs. Canning (now Lady) sent a most severe message to Huskisson charging him with ingratitude, and Sturges, Bouverie and others of C.'s friends are decidedly against him. Wynne[3] meant to resign and the Grevilles are

[1] The *Greville Memoirs*, Vol. I, p. 125.

[2] Henry, Lord Brougham and Vaux, 1778–1868. Raised to the peerage and the Chancellorship 1830.

[3] Right Hon. Sir Charles Williams Wynne.

furious. Lord Rosslyn has refused the ordnance and I believe the Cabinet. Scarlet[1] resigned[2] yesterday and they begged him to wait till Monday. Canning wrote to Wellington last spring, to say that he never could serve in a Cabinet in which so unconstitutional a measure was taken as the Prime Minister being Commander in Chief. Some of the Tory Heads are much annoyed and the King is in ill-humour with the Government and kind to us.

"Best respects and regards to my Lady.

"Yrs. ever,

"BROUGHAM."

It was well known that the Duke of Wellington was an inveterate opponent of Catholic Emancipation, though, true to his policy as a tactician, he was prepared to reverse his attitude if he saw that circumstances rendered this advisable for the country. His chief opposer was Daniel O'Connell, leader of the Irish, a man of wealth and old family, a skilful party leader, and an orator of power and pathos; but in other respects a vain and scurrilous demagogue.

The light in which Coke personally regarded O'Connell we glean only from secondary information. Some time afterwards, when a subscription was started to defray the election expenses of O'Connell in Dublin, Coke contributed to it, and the Duke of Bedford thereupon wrote to him:—

"It gave me great pleasure to see your name amongst the subscribers, because I felt certain that I had done right. . . . It was not from any feeling in

[1] Sir James Scarlett, Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer in 1834. Created Lord Abinger in 1835.

[2] He resigned the Attorney-Generalship, but not very willingly. He wrote to ask Lord Milton's advice, and Lord Milton advised his resignation.

favour of O'Connell that I subscribed, but because, like yourself, I thought it an act of *justice* to protect him from the abominable persecution of the Tories. You and I have acted together in Politicks from my first entrance into publick life, in good times and in bad times; we are, I trust, sound Whigs, and what is more sound Foxites, and, when I feel supported by your name and your authority, I feel confident that I cannot be far wrong."

From this it would appear that Coke, like others of his party, while clearly dissociating the champion of Catholic Emancipation from the cause he championed, yet felt bound to support the former out of loyalty to the latter. The strenuous opposer of O'Connell's claims, the Duke of Wellington, however, met with the unqualified disapprobation of the Whigs in his new rôle of statesman. Throughout the country, indeed, the majority of the advocates of Catholic Emancipation anticipated the very worst from the new Ministry. Two Whigs only appear to have foreseen that good might arise out of apparent evil.

"I think," wrote the Duke of Bedford to Coke, "that the Duke of Wellington is much disposed towards economy and a repression of abuses in every branch of the Government; and I own I dread the Ultra Tories (a vile set) succeeding in upsetting him."

Lord Holland also appears from the first to have recognised that the Duke, though strongly opposed to Catholic Emancipation, was more strongly averse from civil war, which he recognised to be the only alternative.

"Wellington," Lord Holland wrote to Coke, "will on these subjects, as on others, yield where he cannot

help it. Indeed, some day he means to move Parliamentary Reform, and though I do not do him the credit of intending that or anything else so long before the time, I should not be surprised if, in the course of the session, he took that question out of the hands of its constant supporters and moved it himself."

This opinion of the Duke's policy was subsequently proved to be in part correct. In the first session of 1828, Lord John Russell moved and carried the Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, which was universally recognised to be the prelude to further concessions. The next year Coke led the van of the body of Norfolk clergy who were striving to promote Catholic Emancipation, and presented on their behalf a second petition with this object. On this occasion he pointed out that "he had voted for this measure for twenty-five years, and intended to vote for it whenever it was brought forward. With that declaration he had offered himself to his constituents."[1] An adverse petition was got up by the opponents of the measure, but so entirely had the lapse of time broadened the views of churchmen, that only 110 signed it out of 350 clergy in the diocese. Coke stated to the House, "to show how strong was the desire of abolishing these civil distinctions from among all classes of British subjects, that, in spite of a few counter petitions which had been asserted to have been got up to the contrary in those parts, he declared before God that he believed the county of Norfolk to be unanimous on this question."[2]

On April 14th, 1829, the Bill for Catholic Emancipa-

[1] *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates,* March 12th, 1829.
[2] *Norwich Mercury.*

tion was passed by the Lords, having been, as Coke stated, carried in the Commons on the anniversary of the day when, half a century before, he had first voted with Fox for that measure.

"My dear friend," wrote the Bishop of Norwich to him, "I shall die content. This glorious event has afforded me a degree of pleasure which no words can express, and which only a mind like yours can conceive."

Coke, however, in conjunction with his party, gave little credit to the Duke of Wellington for a measure which the latter had been coerced into conceding. In a speech at Lynn the next year, he said:—

> "When the Duke of Wellington was first mentioned as the head of the Ministry he himself said he must be supposed to be a madman if he looked for such a situation. A few weeks after, however, he became Premier, and no sooner did he assume the place, than he became all-powerful, and he would submit to no one having a voice in the Cabinet but himself. He gave the country what he said he would not give—Catholic Emancipation. But it was because he was obliged to do it. No one could accuse the Duke of Wellington of a want of foresight. He knew if it had not been granted, Ireland would have been in a state of Civil War or separated from England. He knew that the army were, many of them, Catholics, and that they were not likely to fight against their brother Catholics. I never gave the Duke of Wellington the credit for that measure which others have done. I give the Marquis of Angelsea the greatest credit for having pointed out the true state of the case.[1] His papers have not

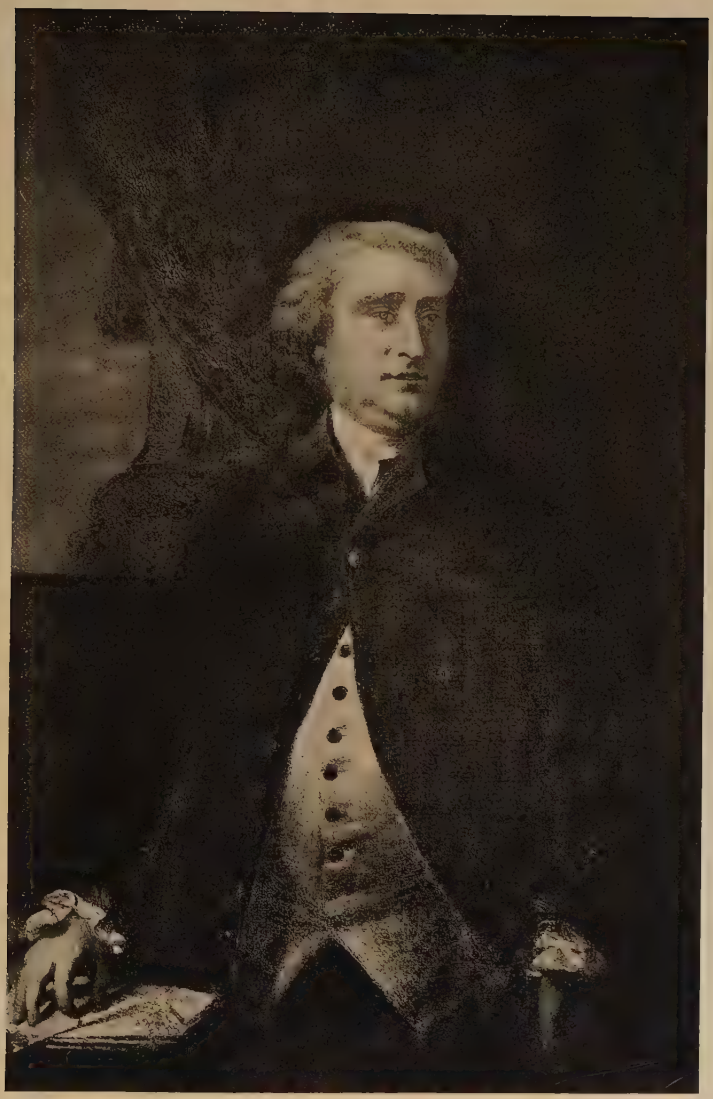
[1] The Marquis of Angelsey wrote in 1828 to warn the Government that they were on the brink of civil war in Ireland, and advised concession with regard to the Catholic question. The Duke of Wellington, though he had made up his mind with Peel for Catholic Emancipation, recalled Angelsey from the Lord Lieutenancy, and appointed in his place the Duke of Northumberland, a consistent opponent of emancipation.

come to light, but when they do they will reflect credit upon him. The Duke had prudence enough to bring forward such measures as would enable him to retain his place. The Whigs will be obliged to go with the Duke because he will bring forward those measures which they have constantly advocated."[1]

Soon after the passing of the Bill for Catholic Emancipation the Dissenters gave a dinner to celebrate the event, at which seven or eight hundred people were present. When the toast was given, "To the Memory of Charles James Fox," Coke was asked to say a few words with reference to it. To the surprise of everybody he refused, and though begged again and again to alter his decision, he persisted in his refusal. Asked afterwards, privately, why he had acted in such an extraordinary manner, he replied that he would never stand up and make a complimentary speech to the Dissenters who had turned him and four other members out in 1784, in mistrust of those very principles, on his loyalty to which they were now anxious to congratulate him.

By a curious coincidence, at the very moment when Coke's thoughts were full of the triumphant passing of a measure for which Fox had striven so earnestly, the dead statesman was brought yet more vividly to his remembrance. The month following the concession of Catholic Emancipation, Lord Crewe died, leaving special directions that no carriage should follow his coffin, but that he was to be carried to the grave by his own labourers, each of whom was to receive a suit of clothes and a guinea for his trouble. Forty poor men,

[1] *Norwich Chronicle*, October 23rd, 1830.



THE RIGHT HON. CHARLES JAMES FOX.
By Sir Joshua Reynolds.

therefore, relieving each other, bore the remains of their master from Crewe Hall to the church, a distance of three miles, and only immediate relations were present at the simple ceremony which followed. Coke thus did not attend the funeral, but when the will was read his name appeared for a legacy which, as his informant writes, "I feel sure you will value in a double account, both for the friend who gave and the one of whom you are reminded." This was Fox's portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds then in Grosvenor Street, and which was promptly sent down to Holkham, where it was hung in the library.

This picture of Reynolds's is exceptionally beautiful, and far surpasses Opie's portrait of Fox to which the place of honour in the Saloon at Holkham had been assigned. In connection with it, a characteristic story is told about George III. Reynolds was no courtier, and when the King and Queen sat to him for their portraits in their coronation robes, to be hung in the Council Chamber of the Royal Academy, Reynolds, absorbed in his work, treated the august couple too much as models and too little as Royalty. The King never forgot the lack of deference in the great painter's manner, and though subsequently civil to him, never again honoured him with the royal patronage. When Reynolds's picture of Fox was exhibited in the Academy and elicited general admiration, George III, hearing it mentioned in his presence, at once betrayed his dislike both of the portrayer and the portrayed. "Yes—yes, very like, very like," His Majesty conceded. "Sir Joshua's picture is finely painted—a fine specimen of art;—but *Gillray* is the better limner. Nobody hits

off Mr. Fox like him—Gillray is the only man who can draw the *Man of the People* as like as my profile on a halfpenny."[1] Gillray, as is well known, was the celebrated caricaturist.

Despite being the owner of two fine portraits of Fox, Coke always regretted that he possessed no bust of Fox by Sir Francis Chantrey. About this date he himself first sat to Chantrey for his own bust, which is now in the hall at Holkham. Sir Walter Scott was also at that time sitting to the great sculptor, and Tom Moore in his diary mentions how one morning, hearing that Rogers, the poet, was going to breakfast with Chantrey, he personally went there early, and found, besides Rogers, "Sir Walter Scott, Coke of Norfolk, and Allen." As soon as Sir Walter Scott had finished his sitting, Coke had to take his turn, whereupon Chantrey begged Tom Moore and Rogers to stay and *keep Coke in talk* during his sitting. In this they apparently succeeded, for Moore remarks that they "got him upon old times."[2] Coke was a great *raconteur*, and in later life his stories had an historical value, of which most of his listeners were aware; though Moore, as has before been mentioned, showed some petty spite with regard to Coke's proficiency in this respect.

"The Belgrave Square Phidias," as Christopher Hughes invariably called Chantrey, was a frequent visitor at Holkham. He, like Opie and West, was of humble origin; his father had been a carpenter, and, as

[1] *Reminiscences of Henry Angelo* (1830), Vol. I, p. 363.

[2] See *Journal and Correspondence of Thomas Moore*, ed. by Lord J. Russell, chap. XVI, p. 21.

THOMAS WILLIAM COKE
Bust by Chantrey

has often been related, when a lad Francis Chantrey used to take barrels of milk slung on an ass from Norton to Sheffield for sale. In later life he had the good sense to be proud of having risen on the merits of his own genius. At Holkham he was fond of talking of the humbleness of his origin, and took an unassuming pride in comparing what he had been with what he had become.[1]

In appearance Chantrey was supposed to bear a likeness to Shakespeare; in temperament he was generous, wayward, contented and of a remarkable sweetness of temper, which made him universally popular. He was a keen sportsman, and seldom missed the Holkham battues, although he had the use of one eye only—the left one. He had been born blind of the right eye, and this was never discovered till he was ten years of age. He was very careful never to let his sitters know this, but his gun had to be adjusted to his peculiar sight, and no one but himself could use it. When shooting, he always wore a large Peruvian hat, in which, however, he presented a less peculiar appearance than did Sir Humphry Davy, whose favourite headgear for the covert was a broad-brimmed hat covered with scarlet cloth!

In November, 1829, having gone as usual to Holkham for the shooting, Chantrey scored a success of which he

[1] Haydon appears to have entertained an opposite opinion of Chantrey's character, for he remarks: "When Chantrey first set up his carriage he was not to be borne. It was all day: 'John, tell Richard to desire Betty to order Mrs. Chantrey's maid to tell Mrs. Chantrey to send down my snuff-box,'" etc., etc. (see *Table Talk of Haydon*, Vol. II, p. 332). But this almost childish delight in the novelty of his position was quite consistent with Chantrey's love of comparing his former with his altered circumstances, and contained no element of snobbishness.

was proud. On November 17th an entry in the game book records how "*Mr. Chantrey has particularly requested that it be entered in this book that he* (*for the first time*) *was at the Head of the Battue, having killed* 51 *Head.*" His companions, moreover, do not appear to have had much occasion for boasting. On November 18th occurs the pathetic entry: "*Mr. Stanhope regretted that he travelled* 36 *miles to kill nothing. Sir Ronald Ferguson nil.*" But luck attended Chantrey. On November 19th he again distinguished himself by killing at one shot a hare and a rabbit, while on November 20th came the final triumph. Mr. Stanhope, who was an eye-witness of what occurred, writing afterwards to Collyer, the chaplain, gave an account of the event:—

> "Perhaps you would like to have my recollections of the day. Chantrey was placed in the gravel pit just under the hall. I was standing next to him, but hid from him by the bank formed by the pit. Knowing how keen a sportsman he was, I was amazed at seeing him running up to me without his gun just at the moment when the hares were passing us in all directions; but when I saw him waving his Peruvian hat over his head, and distinguished his joyous countenance, I knew that all was right. 'Two cocks at one shot!' burst from him and announced to me the feat that he had performed!"

This success, following on that of the previous day, was hailed by all the assembled sportsmen with applause. Coke, always an enthusiastic admirer of a good shot, forthwith marshalled the whole party, "guns," keepers and beaters, in a line; he then made Chantrey pass down the ranks, and, as he passed, each

BUST OF T. W. COKE BY CHANTREY

individual uncovered and made a formal obeisance to the hero of the day.

The event was entered in the game book at Holkham, inserted by Archdeacon Glover, one of the party, and attested by Mr. Coke:—

> "Amidst the events of this day it is specially worthy of being recorded that Mr. Chantrey killed *at one shot two woodcocks*, and, considering this exploit as among the many illustrious achievements, if not the most extraordinary of that great and extraordinary man, it was unanimously proposed to Mr. Coke, that the spot should be henceforth handed (down) to Posterity, and the honour of the Individual perpetuated by the name of Chantrey Hill being given to it; assured that no Sculptor in Europe had ever done before so much in the art of shooting, (Mr. Chantrey) having but the day before killed at one shot a hare and a rabbit.
>
> "Testified by
> "Thomas William Coke.
> "Archdeacon Glover.
> "John Spencer Stanhope."

In a duplicate of the above memorandum preserved by Chantrey among his papers and found after his death, Captain Digby is added to the list of witnesses.

Chantrey forthwith determined to carve the woodcocks in marble for Mr. Coke in commemoration of his feat, and it was decided that a verse descriptive of the event should be inscribed underneath. The *literati* of the day were consulted, and the condition imposed by Chantrey was that any epigram, to be successful, must clearly describe the death of the two birds by this single shot. So numerous, however, were the effusions sent in, that the idea of selecting any one of them had to be

abandoned. A prose inscription was employed in the place of a poetical one, and the most curious thing in connection with this is that the date inscribed upon it is the wrong one, since Chantrey's shot, according to the irrefutable testimony of the game book, took place on November 20th, 1829, and the inscription bears the date of the year following.

Two Woodcocks
Killed at Holkham
November 1830
at one shot
Presented to Thomas William Coke Esq. 1834.

Beneath is a medallion of Chantrey and the words:

The Medallion of
Sir Francis Chantrey
was added by the
Earl of Leicester
MDCCCLVII.

Later, the rejected epigrams were published in a fair-sized book, called *Winged Words on Chantrey's Woodcocks*.[1] Twenty-seven of these alone were collected from Holkham, while other contributors sent verses which had come into their possession from many well-known men; several were by Lord Jeffrey, some by the Bishop of Oxford, by the Bishop of Chichester, by Baron Alderson, Sir Robert Adair, Dr. Moberly, Dr. Scott and others; Lord Brougham also forwarded verses from Lord Wellesley, Bishop Maltby and many

[1] Edited by James Patrick Muirhead, M.A. Pub. John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1857.

CHANTREY'S WOODCOCKS

of his friends. The epigrams are in a variety of tongues—English, French, Latin, Greek, etc.; and one peculiarity of the collection is that the versifiers, not contented with a single effort, have in most instances contributed several effusions; Mr. J. P. Muirhead, for instance, alone provided *eighty-eight* epigrams of his own composition, which show a surprising variety and ingenuity of imagination. His neatest is, perhaps, one in French :—

> Sculpteur-chasseur, ton bizarre génie
> Donne en même tems la mort et la vie !

Which bears a resemblance to Lord Jeffrey's :—

> The life the sportsman-artist took,
> The artist-sportsman could restore ;
> As true and warm in every look,
> And far more lasting than before !

Most of the writers refer facetiously to the fact that Chantrey carved the dead woodcocks first in *stone* and then on *toast;* while some attempt a political pun :—

> A rare success was Chantrey's lot,—
> He bagg'd us at a single shot ;
> And, to commemorate his skill,
> In marble made *this Re-form'd Bill!*

But perhaps the only poetical one is that by the Bishop of Oxford :—

> Life in Death, a mystic lot,
> Dealt thou to the wingéd band :—
> Death,—from Thine unerring shot,
> Life,—from Thine undying hand.

To further immortalise Chantrey's success, Sir Edwin Landseer painted a picture of the birds as a present for

him. In this, "Mustard," a Dandie Dinmont given to the sculptor by Sir Walter Scott, sits watching the movements of a cat who is stealing towards the dead woodcocks. In the background are Chantrey's tools and his bust of Sir Walter Scott.

In spite, however, of his prowess with the gun, Chantrey was a singularly humane man, and always felt great compunction at the slaughter of which he had been guilty. Writing from Holkham once and describing the battue, he stated that, personally, he had killed thirty pheasants and twenty hares; but that when the result of his sport was cast at his feet, he felt sick at the sight of the destruction by which his success was bought.[1] When fishing he always killed the fish instantly with an ivory rule which he carried in his pocket for purposes of art.

Yet the extreme gentleness and amiability of his disposition did not prevent his being very determined and independent when occasion required. One instance of this occurred when Coke introduced him to the Duke of Sussex, who forthwith determined to have his bust done by the great sculptor. At this time the Duke wore a beard and long moustachios, and when he came to sit to Chantrey, the latter informed his Royal Highness that it was impossible under such conditions to do justice to the royal mouth and chin. The Duke, who was in the habit of uttering somewhat grotesque oaths, swore lustily, and declared that his beard should go down with him to the grave. Chantrey promptly echoed the oath, and added: "Very well, Sir, then I cannot model your Royal Highness's face before that

[1] *Life of Sir Francis Chantrey*, by Jones, p. 148.

goes down to the grave!" The Duke, taken aback, laughed at this impertinence, and the next day, to Chantrey's surprise, appeared clean-shaven for his sitting.

In obviously much the same spirit Chantrey once told Coke how he had replied to the Dean and Chapter of Westminster when they came to consult him respecting the best method of preserving the public statues in the Abbey. His answer was: "Put no railings round them. People are always saying to John Bull, you must not go here and you must not go there, and his natural answer is—'*I'll let you see that I will!*' When I was at Westminster the boys always made a point of scaling the railings round the monument of John, Duke of Argyll, and each boy who did this left his initials on the monument to record the feat. Had there been no railings the monument would have been unmolested."

This story, illustrative of the contrariness of John Bull, was related by Chantrey to Coke in connection with an incident which occurred during one of his visits to Holkham.

Upon a certain day in the week Coke always threw open the park at Holkham to the public. One restriction only he made: at that date a small sheet of water stood immediately in front of the house, which was connected with the lake by a stream spanned by a bridge; and on public days, in order to prevent the too near approach of strangers to the house, he caused the bridge to be removed, so that visitors could not trespass beyond the south lawn unbidden.

Now, ever since the days of "Owd Tom" and Dick Merryfellow, Coke had been fond of concealing his

identity, when this was practicable, and of mixing freely with the poorer classes, in order that he might become better acquainted with their grievances as tenants, or their views as homely, but often practical, politicians. Naturally, no disguise was likely to prove effectual in deceiving tenants who lived in the near neighbourhood of Holkham, and to whom he was well known; but at that date, when distance was a great deterrent to all who could not readily afford the means of locomotion, there were many who, living some miles away, were still unfamiliar with his appearance, and who, arriving at Holkham filled with the hope that they might perhaps see the great landowner of whom they had heard so much, entirely failed to recognise him when, returning home from long hours of voluntary labour in the sheep-pens, he was clad in the unexpected garb of a smock frock.

In this costume Coke had some adventures which greatly amused him; but few more than the following. Returning one day past the park side of the stream which formed the barrier to too obtrusive visitors, he perceived an old man standing discontentedly before it, and, struck by the woebegone expression on the face of this unknown guest, he paused to inquire the cause. The old man explained that he was Mr. Allen, who had come from Fakenham, eleven miles off, and that he had wished to see all that there was to be seen at Holkham—which wish apparently he could not gratify, for it appeared that, with ample acres of parkland in which to wander, Mr. Allen desired to explore that part of the grounds only which was withheld from access. Making his comments more telling by means

of emphatic expletives, he summed up indignantly: "Ah don't hold wi' this 'ere Maister Coke; Ah'd loike to git to yon side not a-wettin' of ma feet!"

The supposed labourer cordially seconded the disparaging view of Mr. Coke's conduct in removing the bridge, but casually propounded the fact that, things being as they were, whosoever wished to get to the other side of the stream dry-shod, must perforce be carried across it. Mr. Allen, of Fakenham, promptly falling in with a proposition which he cunningly conceived to contain *a hint*, offered his interlocutor the job for the handsome payment of sixpence; adding, however, dubiously, "You be nigh as old as ah be!" Coke, thus put upon his mettle, did not hesitate. He shouldered Mr. Allen without more ado, and bore him safely across the stream, receiving in return the promised reward of sixpence.

He thereupon informed Mr. Allen that if he would go to the house and ask for a glass of beer, he would find that this would be given to him; and the visitor, highly pleased at this agreeable information, made his way to the back door, at the same time as the supposed labourer made his way to the front. But great was the surprise of the former to receive, not only the promised glass of beer, but a handsome meal, and his sixpence restored to him, and to learn that he had been carried across the stream by no less a person than Mr. Coke himself, who, so history relates, was by several years his senior.

About the date of this adventure Coke received letters from two old friends who never failed, at in-

tervals, to recall themselves to his remembrance. The first was Sir John Sinclair, who has before been mentioned in connection with his attendance at the Holkham Sheep-shearings.

Sir John Sinclair to Thomas William Coke.

"My dear Sir,

"I have at last completed a curious and important discovery, that the flowers or bloom of the potatoe will produce some valuable Colours, equal to any that can be procured from any foreign material. The Irish may now adorn themselves with the flowers of the potatoe while they are living upon the root.

"I inclose a specimen of the amber or orange Die [*sic*]. It would not be popular in all parts of Ireland,[1] but the potatoe flowers will also produce a beautiful green, and I have sometimes thought of having neck-handkerchiefs or cravats made with alternate stripes of green and orange, which all parties in Ireland might wear, as an emblem of 'Conciliation and Union.'

"In time of War this Discovery will prove of peculiar importance. A certain quantity of the [illegible] Bark from which a yellow Dye is extracted now costs only 15s., while the same quantity in time of war would cost seven guineas. Our own fields, however, will produce as beautiful a tint for the expense of gathering it, while there is reason to believe that cutting off the flowers of the potatoe, by preventing the formation of the apple, augments the quantity and improves the quality of the root. The French are very angry at our having made this discovery, as it will give us a great advantage in some important branches of manufactures.

"William Smith[2] was here when the discovery

[1] Orange was the Protestant badge.

[2] M.P. for Norwich.

was first completed, and I gave him a specimen of it, to be sent to his constituents at Norwich. The discovery was not perfected until the flowers had almost disappeared, so that we cannot, unfortunately, carry on the manufacture to any considerable extent this year.

"With best wishes, believe me, my dear sir, always most sincerely yours,

"JOHN SINCLAIR.

"133 GEORGE STREET, EDINBURGH,
"30*th September*, 1829."

The other communication was from Coke's old acquaintance, Amelia Opie.

Mrs. Opie was now a widow and a Friend. Her singing, her dancing, her cerulean garments and her waving feathers were of the past. Gowned in grey, relieved only by a prim muslin fichu, she occasionally called upon Coke in company with Elizabeth Fry, similarly clad, when the two ladies sat demurely together upon the sofa, and, from under their poke bonnets, discoursed upon topics which they deemed sufficiently edifying. But the old Adam was not extinct in Amelia Opie. Her passion for beautiful colours she gratified by means of flashing prisms arranged about her room; her letters to Coke reveal her former vivacity; her love of travel was unextinguished.

Amelia Opie to Thomas William Coke.

"NORWICH, 11*th Mo.*, 1829.

"Respected and dear friend,

"Though it is always gratifying to me to receive the annual mark of thy obliging remembrance, it was more than usually gratifying to receive it

to-day; because ever since my return home I have been wishing to write to thee.

"Thou art probably not aware that I have been passing some months at Paris, and I have wished to tell thee that I saw one admirable and distinguished person there with whom I frequently conversed of *thee*, and I even *presumed so far* as to assure him that thou wouldst be delighted to see him at Holkham!

"This person was General Lafayette.

"He is indeed very desirous to see *thee* in the first place and thy *farms* in the next, and to compare his farming experience with thine. But it is comparatively on a small scale, certainly, though he has very fine merinos and a thousand sheep in all. This farm is one of his greatest delights, and this hero of two revolutions, this "homme des deux mondes," is never so happy as when, surrounded by his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren he is going the round of his cows, sheep, hogs and sows.

"He invited me to La Grange, especially to see two of my Compatriots (*natives of Holkham*) in the shape of two *little Cows* from Baltimore which were a present to him, and I found them fat and fine, and much valued by their present possessor.

"It was truly interesting to me to be at a soirée at Lafayette's at Paris on the 14*th of July*,—'We were not so *calm*,' said he, 'this day, 40 years, but much more animated!'[1]

"I prolonged my stay at Paris in order to await the General's return from his triumphal progress through the provinces, and as soon as he came back he begged me to set off for La Grange. There I met Count Ségur,[2] the author of the Memoirs and his comrade in America, also Count de Tracy[3] who, with

[1] The fall of the Bastille, July 14th, 1789.

[2] Louis Philippe, Comte de Ségur d'Aguesseau (1753–1830), of a distinguished French family. Ambassador at St. Petersburg, served in the American War of Independence, and took a leading part in the French Revolution. A considerable author.

[3] Antoine Louis Charles Destutt, Comte de Tracy (1754–1836), French soldier, Academician and "ideological" philosopher.

l'Abbé Gregoire[1] and Lafayette are three of the 40 survivors of the first Constitutional Assembly.

"The ancient round tower in which is the General's beautiful library, is now covered by an ivy planted in 1802 by our beloved Patriot Charles James Fox, and is green and flourishing like his memory.

"Lafayette has not been in England since the year '76! He ought to come again, though he may perhaps be wanted at home. He has been so *marvellously preserved* and is in such health still that I cannot believe that his *public* services are all performed.

"I conclude thou hast heard that a certain widowed friend of ours sent a painter over to Paris to paint his portrait for her. It was a fortunate circumstance for me, as I was permitted to attend all the sittings. I wonder she has not yet sent for it to Wrexham, but I hear it is still in Norwich.

"Excuse this long intrusion on thy time, but I told the General that I should boast to thee of the pleasure and privilege I had enjoyed. He was glad to hear of thy domestic happiness, and that thou hadst so many promising *representatives*.

"Believe me, with my best respects to Lady Anne Coke, and to thy daughters, if with thee,

"Very respectfully thine,

"Amelia Opie."

Lafayette, as Mrs. Opie no doubt discovered, had always taken the deepest interest in any information respecting Coke. The friend of Fox, of the Duke of Bedford and of many of the Americans who had experienced Coke's hospitality, the General had heard much respecting the "Norfolk Patriot," and the two

[1] Henri Gregoire (1750–1831). Acted a prominent part throughout the Revolution, and at the blasphemous Feast of Reason refused, in the face of the infuriated mob, to renounce Christianity. He afterwards became a member of the Corps Legislatif.

men, though fated never to meet, and connected only by their joint love of liberty and their joint love of farming, always felt for each other a reciprocal admiration and affection. In 1818 Coke had sent to the United States some of his Devons as a present to Mr. Patterson. On General Lafayette's visit to America in 1825 he saw the descendants of this Holkham stock, and the owner, observing how greatly interested the General was on hearing from whence they came, gave him some cows to take back to La Grange. These were the "little compatriots" which Amelia Opie was amused to see on her visit to him.

In another letter written during this visit to France Amelia Opie exclaims :—

> "General Lafayette, the hero of my childhood, the idol of my youth! And I have found him far beyond my idea of him, high-raised as it was! He is a handsome man of 72, humble, simple, and blushing like a girl at his own praises, with manners the most perfect possible; and his *bonhomie* is so striking that one almost forgets his greatness and his fame!"

And she was stirred profoundly when in the street she met men singing the new National song, the *Parisienne*, one thrilling verse of which ran :—

> Pour briser leurs masses profondes
> Qui conduit nos drapeaux sanglants?
> C'est Liberté des deux mondes,
> C'est Lafayette, en cheveux blancs!

But Lafayette, *en cheveux blancs*, still continued to cherish the hope that he might one day visit Holkham.

> "The descriptions I have received from Mr. Hughes [he wrote to Coke, later, in his broken

English] cannot but increase the very great desire I have to obtain my share of the Good Holkham Welcome; but the state of public affairs and my own duties make it impossible to indulge my inclinations. But I more cordially enjoy in thought the prosperities and Happiness of your so very venerable and Endearing Situation."

And in the same letter he says:—

"It is to me a matter of gratification and pride to think of the sympathies that connect me with you, my dear Sir. Both aged and constant friends of universal freedom. Both the personal friends of Fox and Fitzpatrick, and Worshippers of their Memories. Both farmers,—but in this last Qualification you have much the advantage of me, although my fondness for the profession cannot be exceeded. So was my adopted father, Washington, whose high regard for you I have had occasion to witness."

And he invariably signs himself—

"One who takes a *great delight* in being honoured with the right to call himself your obdt. and most sincere friend,

"LAFAYETTE."

The General's wish to visit Holkham, however, was destined never to be gratified. His patriotism chained him to France. Amelia Opie proved correct in her belief that when she saw him in 1829 his public services were not yet all concluded. In the Revolution of 1830 he again took command of the National Guard, and, still intrepid, pursued a similar line of conduct, though with a similar want of success as in the first Revolution.

That same year in England, on the 26th of June, George IV died, and the Duke of Clarence came to the

throne as William I of Hanover, the Second of Ireland, the Third of Scotland and the Fourth of England. One of the first acts of the new King was to express a wish to see the man whom, he said, "he was proud to call the first Commoner in his kingdom."[1] Coke, therefore, went to pay his respects to His Majesty, when, being no courtier, he did not kiss the hand of his former friend, as etiquette now demanded, but shook it warmly as he had been in the habit of doing. King William, however, appeared all the better pleased to see him, and gave him a most hearty welcome, so that they parted, neither dreaming how soon the cordiality of the new monarch towards his first commoner was to be put to a somewhat severe test.

In the August following there was a General Election, when Coke proposed to stand again for the county of Norfolk.

"You are a most gallant and undauntable politician," wrote Lord Lynedoch to him, "to look with such unshaken nerve at the possibility of a contested county Election!" And Lord Holland added his comment: "Whigs with £3000 to spend on a venture are, alas! strangely out of date. . . . You are zealous and of a spirit indeed to wish for a third candidate in the county. It is like you, but like no other Member. 'Save me, and save my money,' is generally the motto."

But Coke's speech at the Nomination was as full of energy as ever.

"The Government would be glad to turn me out," he said. "I have been a marked man because I

[1] Quoted in a speech at a meeting of Freeholders, July 31st, 1830. (Pamphlet in the possession of Sir William ffolkes.)

chose to have opinions of my own. I have always supported the principles I professed through good and evil report. I am certainly advanced in years, but in excellent health. I have now represented the county for over fifty-four years, during which I have always acted upon the principles of that great statesman, Mr. Fox; and I shall continue to do so to my grave."[1]

He was elected with Sir William ffolkes, and at three in the afternoon, when, in company with his little son Henry, he was chaired through the streets of Norwich, there was not a window or a balcony or available space along the route which was not crowded with people who had come to see the Father of the House of Commons, the man who had been their representative in thirteen Parliaments.

The next month there occurred the event which created much divergence of opinion among Coke's constituents, and occasioned a serious dilemma to good King William.

In honour of the return of Mr. Coke and Sir William ffolkes for Parliament, a series of public dinners was given at Yarmouth, Norwich, Wisbech and Lynn. At the latter place the dinner given by Scarlett Everard, the Mayor, to the gentlemen of the town and county, took place in September, when about 250 people were present. At the close of the dinner, among other toasts was proposed: "The Father of the New King—the Memory of George III." Now it was not in Coke's nature to pay homage to a man when dead whose policy of bribery and coercion he had despised when living. Undeniably, it would have been more

[1] *Norwich Mercury*, October, 1830.

tactful to conceal such sentiments by a judicious silence; but neither was it in Coke's nature to dissemble his real feelings. Possibly, too, in days when it was not unusual for a public dinner to last from three in the afternoon till long after night fell, it was somewhat hypercritical to look for tact in the speeches which closed the gathering. However this may be, Coke, being ordered to pay homage where he did not consider it due, stood up, raised an objection to the toast, and firmly refused to drink it. The Tory *Norwich Chronicle*, recording what passed, says :—

"On this occasion Mr. Coke spoke *most at large*[*sic*]. One part of his speech we will give in his own words, as it created much interruption in its continuance.

"'Gentlemen, I shall continue what you have always found me—a Whig. The King can make a Peer—he can put a riband on the breast of a slave—but the King cannot make what the people can—an independent Member of Parliament. The Almighty will soon send me to my grave, but, thank God! I have lived to see an end put to that system first begun by a man in this kingdom and afterwards continued in a neighbouring kingdom by the infamous Bourbons. The picture of that man is in this room—there it is'—Mr. Coke here pointed to a full-length portrait which hung over the Mayor—'the worst man that ever sat on a throne, George III, that bloody King!'"

The uproar was indescribable. Groans and cheers, hisses and applause, resounded through the building. Cries of "Shame!" were drowned by cries of "Bravo!" and "Coke for ever!" while, through the commotion, Coke, unperturbed, continued his speech, concluding with the words :—

"I do not value anything—stars, garters, ribbons, titles, anything that a Minister can give in com-

parison with the situation which I now hold; and the pride of my life shall be to live and die one of the representatives of Norfolk!"

Discussion of this speech formed the principal topic of conversation at the ball at the Assembly that evening, where we are told that Lady Anne Coke was present "in her charming blue hat and feathers." The papers next day were full of comments upon it: the Tory papers loud in denunciation, the Whig papers either ignoring it or staunch in approbation. On October 16th following, the *Morning Chronicle* had a leading article condemning all who had decried Coke's remarks as "heartless," solely because they were directed against a Sovereign who was in his tomb. "The question," it pronounced stoutly, "is not that George III is in his tomb, but whether his memory ought to be venerated. . . . If Mr. Coke believed that George III was the worst man that ever sat upon a throne, his expressing his opinion could not be heartless injustice, for to him George could not be a *venerated* Sovereign"; and it concluded by pointing out "that Mr. Coke during the whole of his career has been the same consistent character, and so will always remain." Meanwhile Coke was inundated with comments from strangers, which are endorsed by him with apparent relish: "*On my address at Lynn—George III!*"

H. B. Fearon to Thomas William Coke.

"Holborn Hill, London,
"*October 21st*, 1830.

"Sir,

"I have to apologise for taking the liberty of addressing you, but I really feel called upon to express my admiration of your noble and honourable

declaration, at the Mayor's dinner, as to the greatly misunderstood character of George 3rd—a character which the faithful historian will be compelled to record in language similar to that which you are reported to have used—'the worst man that ever sat upon a throne—George 3rd—that bloody King.'—But may it not be said that he was even worse than 'bloody'—that he was a hypocrite, invoking the sacred name of religion to aid his crusades against knowledge and liberty, in America, Ireland, and France, in common with England?

"You state, Sir, that you are a Whig: allow me Sir, to say, that you, as well as the late Mr. Fox,—the present Lord Holland, and some half-dozen other great and honourable men, are, or were in truth anything but Whigs: you have *proved* yourselves friends of mankind, and I should say *therefore* you are not Whigs, for Whigs as a party have proved themselves to be alike selfish and intolerant with Tories.—You are too good to be a Whig.

"Drawing to a close, as your long and valuable life now is, there are two points which in your situation I should feel honoured by having noticed on my tomb, the one the carrying to George 3rd the motion to recognise American Independence, the other the declaration before quoted.

"With congratulating you upon the glorious events on the continent, under the steady advance of enlightenment, and of good principles in our own country, and again apologising for thus intruding,

"I have the honour to subscribe myself,

"Sir,

"Your obedient Servant,

"H. B. FEARON."

S. Humphreys to Thomas William Coke.

"WIMBLEDON,

"Sir, "*November 8th*, 1830.

"In permitting myself to trouble you by letter, being an entire stranger, I rely on your

public character to excuse me, although I might mention that I am nearly the oldest Member of the Whig Club, and that I was on very intimate footing with your respectable friend, the late Mr. Windham ;—but the immediate purpose of my letter has been suggested by your remarks in your speech at Lynn, relative to George the Third, which have been discussed by some of my ultra Tory Neighbours, whom I have endeavoured to answer ; and thinking it quite possible that their Sentiments may be repeated as *en passant* by some inferior partisan in the House of Commons to provoke discussion, I have recurred to some acts of that reign very shortly.

"The origin and obstinate pertinacity of the American and French wars you have already noticed, and, in addition to these direful events, permit me to suggest your looking through the annual Registers from 1766 to 1809, and seeing the appalling number of convicts who were executed ; the result will show you that they exceeded the whole of those *who suffered death within the same period in every nation from Naples to Peterborough ;* and especially notice the number on separate occasions, not including those of the Riots in 1780. I think this disproportionate result of comparison can not be satisfactorily met, by saying that our Constitutional Monarch only gave his fiat to these executions on the advice of his responsible Ministers, because no Sovereign was more jealous of his Kingly prerogative than George the Third, whose obstinate Adherence on the Catholic Question silenced every Minister ; and he promptly dismissed every Minister who, during his long reign, evinced a disposition to bring forward measures of liberal tendency ;—yet, in the exercise of his best prerogative of mercy, the appalling numbers who were executed, as well in the country as in London, manifest too much indifference to human life.

"I am sir,
"With much respect,
"Your most obedient servant,
"S. HUMPHREYS."

Colonel Jones to T. W. Coke.

"Radical Jones begs to return his sincere thanks and to express his warmest gratitude to the good, staunch old Whig of Norfolk, Thomas Coke, for the speech he made at Lynn the other day, and which has called forth all the rancour of Parasites. Were all Whigs like to the Lord of Holkham, there never would have been a radical. Long life and health to the man who has so nobly, so boldly spoken the truth and depicted the Wretch and Hypocrite as he ought ever to have been so considered. There never was so bad a man nore [*sic*] worse a King than George the Third, but he went regularly to Church, gave the responses aloud, and cried Amen more noisily than the blest, and so he was respected by English Brutes, and who are still Brutes to hiss the Man who now has courage enough to attribute to him and his admirers and Supporters all the misery with which his Country-men are afflicted.

"Long life with attendant Health to Whig Coke,
"prays,
"RADICAL JONES.

"BROOKS', *Saturday, October 16th*, 1830."

Coke's political opponents, however, eagerly seized the opportunity to endeavour to stir up public feeling against him. The words of his speech were printed in letters half a foot in length, and hung about the towns in Norfolk. One of these posters was sent with an anonymous letter to the Duke of Sussex in an attempt to prejudice him against his friend. To the Duke, however, Coke appears to have written an explanation of the occurrence, which is unfortunately lost, but in which he evidently stated that his remarks had been directed against the Government, rather than the per-

sonality of the Duke's father; in short, that the onus of those errors which he denounced rested with the late Ministers, not the late King. The Duke, in reply, sent a letter which is exceedingly characteristic both of the writer and of the good-natured Sailor King with whom he had discussed the occurrence.

H.R.H. the Duke of Sussex to Thomas William Coke.

"Dear Coke, "*2nd November*, 1830.

"I would not answer your letter before I had shown it to the King who was perfectly satisfied with the explanation, and therefore you may make your mind quite easy upon the Subject. As for myself I cannot deny that I read your speech with pain, convinced that it was a *lapsus linguæ*, but which I feared mischievous people would turn against you. But, as for feeling that it was intended as disrespectful, that never came into my head, on account of the long friendship which has subsisted for so many years between us, and which I am sure is as dear to you as it is to me, and which Time never can alter.

"I hope in the course of the day to have a few words of conversation with the King who is a kind-hearted reasonable man. His observation was—'I can understand it may have arisen from a confusion of the Government and the Reign, and this I really believe is the true story; for, like you, I am an Enemy to War, and had I possessed a vote in Parliament during the American War it would have been given to put an end to it.' I hope this will set your mind at ease, although there was a great disposition at Norwich to misrepresent it: a paper has been printed there copied from the *Standard* Newspaper and which has been sent to me. It was this I feared more than anything else, and had I been at your elbow at the Meeting I would have warned you of the Circumstance that you might have explained yourself.

"I am now going to the House, so I must bid you adieu, with requesting to be kindly remembered to Lady Anne, and signing myself,

"Your sincere and affectionate friend,

"AUGUSTUS FREDERICK.

"Kensington Palace."

Coke subsequently, in a public speech when the Duke of Sussex was present, explained that his remarks respecting George III were what he termed "*a dropped expression!*" and the Duke, always loyal to his friendship, warmly denounced all who thought otherwise. But the Duke nicknamed Coke *Lapsus linguæ*, and ever after called him this; while the King sent him a special invitation to his presence and received him with marked graciousness, at the end of the interview remarking slyly: "Now, Coke, go home and take care of your Freeholders!"[1]

Bishop Bathurst, writing on November 15th, says:—

"Coke was invited by the King *most graciously*, and the Queen invited Lady Anne in her evening party. Our friend, the Duke of Sussex, when Coke was ushered into his study, said with his accustomed air of good-humour: 'I rejoice to see you, *Lapsus Linguæ!* Never mind it!' Had he turned over all the dictionaries in the world he could not have uttered two words more expressive of good taste and good feeling. In truth, a thousand kind and noble actions ought to atone for one indiscreet speech."

As to the anonymous correspondent who had written to the Duke, the latter kept complete silence with respect to the communication he had received until two and a half years later.

[1] *Recollections of Holkham*, 1830. Holkham MSS.

Then on a public occasion,[1] when he knew that the report of his remarks must reach the ears of the delinquent, he produced the letter and proceeded to read it aloud in his stentorian voice with contemptuous emphasis. He next apologised sarcastically for the halting manner in which, owing to the weakness of his eyesight, he had deciphered it, and begged those present to take special notice that he was perfectly sober, since, doubtless, evilly-disposed persons "amongst their malicious misrepresentations will to-morrow say that I was drunk!" Finally, with great unction and enjoyment, he pronounced his verdict upon the writer of the letter. He was, said the Duke—

> "Some one of a dirty, factious, pusillanimous party, who had made use of what was a mere *lapsus linguæ* of the moment for his own wretched objects. Such persons are worse than the midnight assassin. Talk to me of the Midnight Assassin, of the Inquisition, of Persecution and Bigotry, your anonymous writer is far worse than any of these, and more averse to the honest character and straightforward conduct of an Englishman! I treat these insinuations with contempt and scorn! I don't fear them, but I have a horror of such men, and would hold them up on all occasions to public execration. I would fix them to a pillar [pointing to one] and let them stand there as a mark of everything that is detestable! I would show them up to the world in their own execrable light!"[2]

[1] Friday, April 12th, 1833.

[2] *A Narrative of the Proceedings, etc., connected with the Dinner to T. W. Coke, Esqr., on his Retirement from the Representation of the County.* Published in Norwich, 1833.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE PASSING OF THE REFORM BILL

1830–1833

Ætat 76–79

BEFORE long, Coke's name was again brought before the public in an unexpected manner.

The condition of the country when William the Fourth came to the throne was calculated to cause grave anxiety. The poverty of the masses, which had been augmenting through the past years, had now reached a pitch which rendered them desperate, and their discontent alarming, for the growth of the large manufacturing centres since 1790, and the fact that manual labour was becoming more and more at a discount, was an increasing cause of distress. Yet here again, as on a former occasion of all but universal poverty, it is well to compare the conditions existing upon Coke's estate with those prevalent throughout the greater part of England. In this year 1830 it is obvious that both the Holkham and Woburn estates, though naturally affected by the prevailing agricultural distress, were exempt from the dire poverty which existed in other districts. On January 16th of that year a monster meeting was held at Norwich to protest against the Malt Tax, and, on February 16th following,

the Duke of Bedford wrote to Coke: "The times are bad, but I, like you, have not had a single defalcation of rent or reduction applied for. The reason is simple; neither you nor I *screw* our tenants up to high rents which they are unable to bear. This, I fear, is too much the case with the landed interest, who do not sufficiently consider what rent their land will *fairly* bear."

The article before referred to, called "Recollections of Holkham, 1830,"[1] supplies more detailed evidence respecting the condition of Coke's estate at this date than is afforded by the Duke of Bedford's letter. The writer relates how he and a companion went by permission to inspect the Holkham agriculture; and how, having arrived at the house on a lovely September morning for breakfast, from the conclusion of that meal till five in the afternoon they devoted their time to exploring the adjacent farms and crops. In like manner, thirty-eight years before, the farmers, Boys and Bettishanger, had been bidden to view the agriculture at Holkham, and perhaps the only difference which now marked the flight of years was that Coke no longer led his guests on horseback, but ordering his barouche-and-four immediately after breakfast, drove them about the land, calling to his postillions to stop whenever occasion required. But in like manner to those guests of a bygone summer—in like manner to Dr. Rigby in 1816—Coke's present visitors, comparing the prosperity of Holkham with the adversity of other districts—even, as they particularly emphasise, *of Norfolk estates in the immediate neighbourhood*—were filled with surprise.

[1] Holkham MSS.

"It is worth a journey of a hundred miles to see the village of Holkham," the writer pronounced. "What a contrast does it present to that of Houghton, which we visited on Tuesday!" Everywhere, on Coke's land, they state that they found equal evidence of the happiness, wealth and industry of the inhabitants. "Such, indeed, is the attention bestowed upon this village, such the anxiety on the part of the owner that its inhabitants should eat the bread of industry and peace, that, were I to judge only from outward circumstances, I should at once say the inhabitants of this estate *must* be happy!"

From nine in the morning till nine at night Coke was at their disposal, until, "after tea and coffee were brought in," they retired, declining his offer of a bed; and they mention how, throughout the day, they were especially struck by the remarkable vitality of their host and his unflagging activity of mind and body; by his fund of anecdote, which they found inexhaustible; and by his experiences of over half a century of political and agricultural life which were both curious and absorbing. "During this delightful visit," the writer reiterates, in conclusion, "I saw many things which astonished me; but the most astonishing of all is the owner of this noble domain. He is in his 77th year, erect and noble in his appearance; his eye is not dimmed by age, his memory is remarkably good, his strength scarcely impaired. The exertions of the day would have completely knocked up most men of 60."

In view of what follows, this testimony respecting Coke's physical strength has a special interest.

Although Holkham may be said to have enjoyed

Thomas William Coke, M.P.

From the picture by Reinagle

an immunity from the poverty which was crippling other districts, there was one evil to which, on account of that very immunity, it was all the more exposed. Recognising the introduction of mechanical labour to be a cause of poverty amongst the working classes, the animosity of the disaffected was directed against the use and the users of machinery—Coke being well known to be a staunch supporter of both.[1] Bands of rioters, exasperated with starvation and inflamed with drink, roamed the country, armed with bludgeons, their faces hidden under crêpe veils, destroying all the machines they could find, burning the ricks and farms of the owners, and generally attacking peaceful countrymen. Many of these rioters were known to belong to the ruffianly or criminal class; and their approach inspired terror in every neighbourhood. No life was safe, no property secure; and the more prosperous the district, the richer or more industrious a tenant—and thus the greater the probability of machinery being employed—the greater, also, the consequent danger of attack.

Owing to the terrorised state of the country Coke was unable to leave Norfolk for the autumn session of Parliament. A letter written from the House by General Trevor, and bearing date "November 10th, 1830," is endorsed by Coke "*Advice how to attack a Mob.*" The General writes:—

> "There is one Ballot to-day; if your name is called, your excuse will be moved for, and from the state of the country, immediately granted. I trust

[1] Coke was fiercely attacked for his large farms and use of machinery by a pamphleteer named Burges.

you will not suffer from the great fatigue you are undergoing, I wish I was with you if I could render the smallest assistance. If you have to attack a Mob with the Constabulary force, attack them in flank and break their line; you would then secure the ringleaders. There cannot be a risk of their attacking Holkham, but if they did, the wings flank the buildings so well, that a very few men in the *flank* windows would stop an army. I am most anxious to hear as often as possible how you all are; and perhaps Lady Anne will be kind enough to give me frequent Bulletins."

The arrival of the rioters at Holkham was constantly expected, and the whole neighbourhood lived in a state of suspense, more especially as the labourers at Warham refused to be sworn as special constables to quell the disturbance. Not far from Wells, a harmless weaver, who had gone to church one Sunday evening, returned to find his wife and daughter half dead with fright, and his machinery, which represented all his means of livelihood, strewn in fragments about the yard. In many villages the farmers collected together their machines, and, in order to deceive the rioters, broke these to pieces in the hope of thus preserving or hiding them, preferring to incur the minor damage thus inflicted, rather than risk the complete destruction of their valuables and the danger to their own lives at the hands of an infuriated mob, if they were found with machines in their possession. Not so Henry Abbott, one of the largest farmers on the Holkham estate. A man of determined character and somewhat pugnacious disposition, he and his son affected the style of dress worn in France at the period of the first Revolution, to the end of their lives, and long after the

costume had become otherwise extinct, they wore the Hessian boots, leather breeches, big fobs, long pointed coats, wide hats and bag wigs with which one is familiar in pictures of the *sans-culottes*. Still more, his soul matching his garb, the craven spirit of his neighbours filled Abbott with contempt. His letter to Coke gives a graphic picture of the state of the country in the year that King William came to the throne.

Henry Abbott to Thomas William Coke.

"Hond. Sir, "Wicken, 10*th Dec.*, 1830.

"I cannot refrain from communicating to you what has passed within the last fortnight in the immediate neighbourhood where I reside; with the exception of very few individuals—all have taken up their machines and placed them in a *convenient situation to be broken* on the first alarm. I called together thirty-seven men who were constantly employed on my farm, and asked them—in the event of the Mob attempting to break my machines—if they would firmly stand by me? To their everlasting credit one and all declared they would. I lost not a moment in procuring fire-arms (indeed I have a little armoury) and pledged myself, with so true and faithful a band, to head them. On one occasion I put them nearly to the test. Report said that the Mob were at South Acre and were coming to mine. Instantly they came forward, and with one voice declared they would peril their lives in my defence, and in the same moment exclaimed, 'They dare not come!'

"Never can I forget their fidelity.

"Now, Sir, hear the determination of one who revere[s] and look[s] upon you as the dearest friend on earth. Sooner would I, at the head of my gallant and faithful men, fall and be buried under the ruins of my property, than my Boy (who I hope one day to succeed me at Wicken) shall in after years be told—Your father *tamely* and *cowardly* submitted to

the destruction of his machines. TERRIBLE indeed shall be their reception if they dare to make an attack. I have nightly eight men watch my stables, in the different parts of the farm, and am tolerably on the alert myself; my machines have regularly been at work, and shall continue. I have thought it prudent to give up going to the Smithfield Show (owing to the disturbed state of the County) and have sold my two fat Beasts for £72, which perhaps may be as wise as risking them to London.

"I remain, Sir,

"Ever sincerely and faithfully yours,

"H. ABBOTT."

(Endorsed by Mr. Coke,

"1830, Dec. 10.

Hy. Abbott.

Riots.")

But Coke adopted a method of dealing with the insurgents which appealed to him more than the suggestions of the cautious general or the warlike farmer. One day news was brought to him that a large body of rioters was in the neighbourhood, and was then marching towards Burnham, attacking farms and farmers, and leaving general destruction and terror in its wake. He at once ordered his horse and gave instructions that his coach was to drive after him, and that, in it, was to be seated Mr. Collyer, his chaplain. Thus followed, and accompanied only by the postillions and the chaplain, he rode off to a spot where he was told that he could intercept the rioters. Now, whether he trusted in the fact that his personal influence in Norfolk was great, or whether unmindful of his treatment at the hands of a lawless mob twenty-five years before, he did not hesitate to face danger with the reckless courage which had characterised his younger years, is not explained; all we are told is the bare statement of what occurred.

As Coke approached Burnham, he saw ahead a large gang of ruffianly looking men armed with bludgeons and crowbars. He thereupon, turning to his postillions, ordered them to keep at a little distance and not to drive up unless he gave the signal. Next, riding alone up to the rioters, he drew rein in their pathway, and demanded peremptorily how they *dared* disturb the country in such a disgraceful manner? The men, astounded at his sudden appearance and address, hesitated, and were lost. Before they had time to collect their scattered wits, Coke got off his horse, calmly seized two of their ringleaders by the collar, and, all the while rating them soundly for their conduct, signed to his carriage to drive up. So completely was the mob paralysed by this bold move, that they actually suffered four of their party to be placed in the coach and driven off to Walsingham gaol. Still more, this cool and determined action had a permanent effect. Possibly the rioters felt that, in being routed so easily, their prestige had suffered; possibly they considered that the man who, in his seventy-seventh year, could deal with a gang unaided, was not to be faced with impunity; but no more machinery was destroyed on the Holkham estate, and the neighbourhood was thenceforward completely deserted by the insurgents. This was the last time Coke was ever on horseback.[1]

[1] I have given the above account without comment, as it stands recorded by Mr. Keppel in a scrap-book at Holkham. In view of the very different behaviour of the rioters towards Coke in 1815, and the uncontrollable violence of the gangs of rioters throughout the country in 1830, it seems remarkable that Coke's personal influence in this instance should have been exerted with such happy effect. But since Mr. Keppel's memorandum of the story bears the date of its occurrence, he was certainly in a position to test its accuracy, and his evidence may be accepted as incontrovertible.

"I am most happy to learn," wrote the Duke of Sussex on the 26th December, "that matters are becoming more quiet in your neighbourhood, but alas, examples must be made to preserve order, although I trust much will be done to evince a Disposition towards relieving the Distresses of the labouring Poor, who, in many places, have been shamefully neglected. I am happy to say that His Majesty is pretty well, except his suffering severely from Rheumatism which is not improved by the Severity of the Weather. The intelligence from Paris gives hopes that things will now remain quiet. The Conduct of the King[1] and La Fayette has been admirable, and, supported as they are by the National Guards, publick Confidence will most probably be restored. Your friend Lord Wellesley is in attendance here and he is every day my neighbour at dinner, and we often talk of you and Lady Anne, to whom I beg to be most kindly remembered. I enclose a little Note to her to prove that I did not forget her son's birthday, Whom God bless. The Toys and Books were to be sent down for theDay, and I have no Doubt her Ladyship will have pleasure in giving them to my *Godson* from me. With every sincere Wish and Prayer for your Happiness and Welfare, Believe me, my dear Coke,

"Your very sincere friend,

"AUGUSTUS FREDERICK.

"ROYAL PAVILION, BRIGHTON."

As to the warlike farmer Abbott, several letters from him to Coke still exist which are illustrative of the manner in which Coke was regarded by his tenants, and of the trait that Abbott himself emphasises—"that you ever take things as they are meant from any individual, however humble." In view of which fact,

[1] Louis Philippe, Duke of Orleans, raised to the throne by the French Chamber, August 7th, 1830.

Abbott occasionally ventures to expatiate in homely language upon his own happiness in having become Coke's tenant. "To you," he says in one letter, "I owe the situation I hold; to you I am indebted for all which appears prosperous around; when I sometimes cast an eye over the occupation, I am almost in wonder that it should have been my good fortune to have been known to you. Were a stranger to read this letter the inference might be, '*the Man who wrote it has a favour to ask!*' To that, Sir, I put a decided negative; for, as regards myself, your generous kindnesses have anticipated every wish of my heart." And these opinions it appears that Abbott was prepared, if occasion required, to uphold in a somewhat forcible manner. The following letter from him to Coke was written, apparently, under conditions of great agitation; in the original, all punctuation and capital letters are omitted, and the sentences are divided only by long, heavy dashes.

Henry Abbott to Thomas William Coke.

"Castle Acre,

"*Septr. 4th.*

"Hond. Sir,

"I am sorry to trouble you on a circumstance which concerns me much—it happened on Saturday, I met Thomas Moore, Senr, at the Publick Dinner table, in the Angel room—when I received from him as unjust and unmerited an attack as you can conceive—amongst many other observations that I told Lord Lynedocke (and I had often told you the same) my farm was let to me too cheap, by four or five hundred a year.

"Now, Sir, if I ever said to you or to any of your noble friends I rented an extensive Occupation

under you on liberal terms—if gratitude for your favours draw from me expressions dictated by remembrance of your kindness—is it to be borne I am to be publicly taunted—(for what very few of your tenants ever had manly feeling enough in their composition to acknowledge)—is it to be borne, I repeat, that this, or the expressions I used lately at a Publick dinner—that it was a happiness and a blessing to live under Mr. Coke—should draw upon my head the envy and malice of the Holkham tenantry? Nay, when I avowed I held your farm and was under an obligation—not for the terms alone but for your giving me the preference—Moore told me *I* had not the preference—for my brother it was intended, and not me. Much more I could add, but I forbear. This you may rest assured of, *he received such a dressing from me as he will not easily forget.* Had he possessed the spirit of a man and rose from the table, *I should have levelled him in a moment*—I beg your pardon, but I feel it due to myself to lay this matter before you.

"I remain, Hond. Sir,

"Ever faithfully yours,

"H. Abbott.

"I admitted to Moore my farm might have been let for higher rent, but I denied the assertion of ever having said to any one it was worth more by four or five hundred a year."

In one matter Coke earned the outspoken gratitude of the poorer classes: he was held to have been principally instrumental in securing the repeal of the malt tax;[1] while he endorsed the Duke of Bedford's opinion

[1] "To T. W. Coke, Esq., the country is principally indebted for the repeal of the Malt-Tax. He was urged by Ministers to bring on the question of repealing the Malt-Tax before the Property-Tax was decided; but, said Mr. C. at the Norfolk County Meeting, 'I knew their manœuvres too well. I knew that if we could get rid of the

that the landowners had aggravated the burdens from which the masses were suffering. "The landed interest in the House of Commons," he said, "was the great supporter of extravagance and profusion, and the landed proprietors had only themselves to thank when it reacted on themselves by reducing their agricultural interest."

Throughout the country daily the clamour for Parliamentary Reform increased. The establishment of a popular Government in France under Louis Philippe heightened the ferment.

> "The House of Commons," urged Coke, "is the representative of the aristocracy rather than the people. . . . It will come to what Lord Chatham said: 'If the House of Commons did not reform themselves, Reform would come from without with a vengeance.' I believe the day is fast coming when this will take place. No one is more attached to the three estates of King, Lords and Commons than I am. But the aristocracy have shown themselves a base and servile set; they have loaded the country with 800 millions of debt. This has been done by want of representation and the borough-mongering system. If the people themselves could have spoken,

Property-Tax, the war Malt-Tax must go too; the same majority would carry both, and I did not choose to risque the event before the proper season.'"

Hence the verse in *A Poetical Epistle to Lord Castlereagh*—

> Had C—ke, not wary of your dealing,
> And that you were a march for stealing,
> Taken his own time for repealing,
> And know your tricks too well,
> Still, still had malt, and beer, and ale,
> Been dear, as during war, for sale,
> And Barley-growers wept the tale,
> "How bad will barley sell!"

(*The Late Session of the House of Commons*, printed for J. Ridgway and Sons, Piccadilly, p. 32.)

would they have placed the country in that situation? . . . The aristocracy are trying to take away from the people all their rights and independence. . . . It is they who fancy they have a right to quarter themselves upon the tithes and taxes of the people. The borough-mongering system and the influence of the clergy have combined to effect the worst purposes; In the church itself, the most pious, the most exemplary in their lives and conduct are marked and proscribed. Look at the venerable Bishop of Norwich, who is a signal instance of this disgraceful fact, that if a man has a conscientious principle of toleration and liberality to carry him to the next world, he must be content to be restrained from advancement in this." . . .[1]

The Duke of Wellington's opposition to Reform was the death-blow to his Ministry. Parliament reassembled on November 2nd, and, a fortnight later, the Duke was beaten by a majority of twenty-nine in the Lower House, and took the opportunity to resign. After an absence of twenty-three years from power, the Whigs again found themselves called upon to take over the management of the realm under the leadership of Lord Grey. The Cabinet was strengthened by the adhesion of two Canningite Tories, Lord Melbourne[2] and Lord Palmerston,[3] while Brougham, versatile, able and eccentric, became Lord Chancellor.

[1] Speeches quoted in the *Norwich Mercury* and the *East Anglian*, October, 1830.

[2] William Lamb, second Viscount Melbourne (1784–1848), Chief Secretary for Ireland, 1827; Home Secretary, 1830; Prime Minister in 1834, and again in 1845.

[3] Henry John Temple, third Viscount Palmerston (1784–1865), Junior Lord of the Admiralty and Secretary of War, 1809–28; Home Secretary, 1832; Prime Minister, 1855.

Henry Stephenson to Thomas William Coke.

"5 Arlington St.,

"*Nov.* 22, 1830.

"My Dear Coke,

"The Cabinet is settled, and the Ministers kiss hands to-day. In the language of the play-bills the Characters are cast, the company is certainly effective for strength and talent, but I think some of the names in this political Drama are wrongly placed. This may be remedied after they have had a rehearsal or two. The first great point to achieve was to collect the company together and commence a performance. And it is very creditable to the skill, industry and ability of the Chief Manager that he has been enabled in so short a time to arrange the parts.

"Joking apart, all circumstances considered, although there may be some names open to criticism, yet, taking the whole together, it is a Ministry that can do much good, and one which I think will be popular with the country. But then it must gallantly and without reserve [throw?] itself upon the Country at large, and steer its course by the three principles on which it is avowedly formed—Economy, Reform and Peace. The triumph to the Whigs and to their principles is great, and also to Lord Grey; for during the last ten years many of their principles have been reluctantly, but of necessity, adopted and carried by their Political opponents, and Lord Grey is now by the voice of the Country and the vote of Parliament forced into Power. He has before him the means for great and splendid exertions. I think it advisable that he should make a statement of the condition in which he finds the Country and its affairs, and then, steadily and systematically, proceed with the remedies. This cannot too frequently be brought before the eyes and minds of the people—namely, the exact condition to which the Tory system and the last ministers have reduced the Empire.

"Brougham is Lord High Chancellor—well—if he will throw from his mind all nonsensical pamphlets, writing, and all the various extensive pursuits which have hitherto dissipated his attention,[1] and if he will concentrate his energies and direct them to the judicial business of his Court—reform the abuses of it, and undertake remodelling with prudence, moderation and care the whole of the judicial establishment of the country, he will indeed be a benefactor, and earn an immortality—splendid and glorious.

"This great career is open to him. He has no competitor who can interfere or thwart him. He is at the head of everything connected with law, and I confess I feel such an interest in him, and such admiration for his prodigious intellectual powers, that I shall watch his progress with great anxiety, and shall feel mortified if he disappoints my expectations. I hear doubts from many that he will never be steady, never settle into the calm, sagacious Judge. I reply to these doubters—have patience, see what he does; how he conducts himself before you condemn.

"I have run into a long letter. I begin to feel a great interest in events and affairs as they are now passing before me. The times are exciting; I am proud of my party, and cannot help feeling elated that no dirty job, no intrigues of faction, has brought them into Power; and that the regeneration and restoration of the country are thus committed to the judgment and abilities of those whom I have looked up to all my life. I think Albemarle will not be Master of the Buckhounds but Master of the Horse.

"Affectionately,

"H. Stephenson.

[1] Brougham's miscellaneous writings are upon an almost incredible variety of subjects, and number 133. Rogers remarked of him: "There goes Solon, Lycurgus, Demosthenes, Archimedes, Sir Isaac Newton, Lord Chesterfield and a great many more in one post-chaise." And O'Connell's gibe ran: "If Brougham knew a little of law he would know a little of everything."

"I have just feasted my eye with seeing Brougham sit as Chancellor in the Lords, and Grey as Prime Minister. Albemarle is Master of the Horse."

(Endorsed by Mr. Coke,
"*1830, Nov. 22nd*
Hy. Stephenson upon Lord Grey coming into Power";
and, lower, "*Hy. Stephenson upon politicks.*")

"Lord Grey," said Coke, "came into power on the three words—Peace, Economy and Reform. That he economised was proved by the reduction in the expenditure of nearly three millions after he had been in office two years."[1] The long absence of the Whigs from office, however, had made them better at criticism than administration, and they found it hard to settle down into harness, while Brougham, whom many of the Whigs would have excluded from office had they dared, rendered himself as unpopular with his new colleagues as he had been on the Bench.

On the 3rd of February, when Parliament re-assembled, the Ministry made known its intention to produce a measure of Parliamentary Reform, and the day for the introduction of this was fixed for the 1st of March. Petition after petition with regard to the great crisis was prepared throughout the country, and universal excitement prevailed as the day approached. The first reading passed without much opposition, the struggle being deferred till the second reading took place on March 21st. In the fullest House ever known, with six hundred members present, the Bill secured

[1] Speech, December 15th, 1832.

a majority of *one*, and all England illuminated at the news. But the Bill was defeated in Committee, and on April 22nd Parliament dissolved in the midst of a stormy scene which has seldom been equalled. The Dissolution at this crisis ensured the passing of the Bill. In July the Ministers found themselves in a majority of 136, but every detail of the measure was forthwith contested by its opponents, who hoped to wear out the patience of the members as the summer went by.

It was in the course of one of the closing debates on the Bill that Lord John Russell is said to have made use of certain words in the House which were ever afterwards cited against him. "In my opinion," he is reported to have said when referring to the Bill, "so far as Ministers are concerned, *I look upon this as a final measure*." It was instantly assumed by the extreme advocates of Reform that he meant by these words to express his opinion that, with the passing of the Bill then under consideration, the era of Reform would be closed in England—that enough would then have been done in the way of change for all time. By the extreme opponents of Reform his speech was looked upon as a Ministerial pledge against further change. By both factions it was referred to as his "Finality Declaration," and won for him the nickname of "Finality Jack."[1]

A strange fact in connection with this incident is that he was wrongly reported and had never made use of the words with which he was accredited, and which caused the zeal of thousands of the Whigs to ooze out. Both Coke and Lord Albemarle attested that the expression

[1] *The Epoch of Reform*, by Justin McCarthy, p. 78.

had been erroneously attributed to him, and that this was a fact of which all who were present on the occasion were well aware. Both urged him most earnestly to contradict the report; but his temper prevented him doing so, and his only reply to such remonstrances was: "Well, if they choose to say I said it, I will not take the trouble to contradict them."

Thus, many years afterwards, when Lord John undertook further schemes of Reform he was accused of having broken a solemn pledge; and so firmly was the false report of his speech credited, that it has become a matter of history. One of the terms of praise applied to Coke ten years after the incident was supposed to have occurred, was that Coke "was always a Reformer, a progressive Reformer, *no finality man!*"

On March 7th, while the Bill still dragged on its course, a daughter was born to Coke, who was subsequently christened Margaret Anne; and this event once more elicited cordial congratulations from the Dukes of Gloucester and Sussex. "It proves," wrote the former in repetition of his previous remarks on a similar occasion, "that you do justice to the warm interest I take in everything that concerns you and yours"; while the latter, eager in the cause of Reform, wrote that he "prayed that Lady Anne's health will continue to improve, and enable you to come up and give your vote for the third reading of the Reform Bill. It will then remain for the House of Lords to do their Duty, and I hope every one will do it as faithfully and steadily as I shall."

All the Royal Family, except the Duke of Sussex,

were said to be against the Bill, and the ladies of the Court were known to be violent anti-Reformers. The Duke of Gloucester had at length shown himself in his true colours. Years before, in January, 1821, Creevey related how "Slice of Gloucester at Holkham ten days ago, with royal solemnity declared himself a Radical!" But the Duke of Sussex, from the first, appears to have suspected his cousin's protestations, and wrote to Coke dubiously: "*How sound my cousin's Whig principles are remains to be seen!*" This point was not long left in doubt, for the Duke left the Whigs on the Reform question. Fortunately, however, for their wishes, the Duke of Sussex had great influence with the King; but confident of success in all other respects connected with this measure, the Duke wrote to Coke privately that he was nervous lest Lord Grey should lack in firmness, and "be paralized by too nice a sense of Delicacy" ever to succeed in carrying the great question.

On June 4th, 1832, all fears were set at rest; the Bill at last passed the Lords; and Coke wrote to congratulate Lord Grey, who replied in a letter, dated June 7th: "A thousand thanks for the repetition of your kindness. It is the unbidden approbation of men like you that I feel to be most valuable."

This great historical event was afterwards commemorated by Chantrey in a bas-relief which now hangs in the hall at Holkham. In it King William is represented as a slim King John signing Magna Charta, while in the stern warriors grouped around him may be recognised admirable portraits of Coke and other peaceable civilian Reformers of the nineteenth

century, who are somewhat disconcertingly portrayed in the coats of mail and the costume appropriate to the warlike barons of King John.

No one had shown a greater anxiety for the passing of the Reform Bill than had Lafayette.

> "It is almost superfluous to tell you," he wrote to Coke, "that I take the most lively and sympathetic interest in your happy Parliamentary Reform, and in the progressive consequences which I, with you, delight to anticipate. A Union between the Patriots of both Nations may ensure the Emancipation of Europe."

And the news of this event, from which he anticipated results of the greatest importance to the whole Continent, he appears to have learnt first from Christopher Hughes, who was on his way to England, and who, forthwith, carried the General's delighted congratulations to Coke.

On March 3rd, 1830, Mr. Hughes had resumed his post at Stockholm, a post which he was destined, with a brief interval, to hold till 1845, three years before his death. Throughout this period, however, he constantly visited Holkham, where, as he relates, he ever found "Hearts to be trumps—for I *do* know their power chez vous!" while the length of his letters to Coke seemed only to increase as the years went by. "How I am gossiping to you!" he says in one letter, "and I meant to write you but a few words like one of Swift's Laputians, to prevent your entirely forgetting me! You have so many things to do and think of that I should be sorry to tax you to scribble to me; but still

I am determined not to glide entirely out of your thoughts, if an occasional *flap* may serve to preserve me my cherished corner in the hearts of such dear and estimable persons as my friends at Holkham." And he assures Coke cheerfully: "I *seem* what I *am*, and I *am* what I *seem*, a little cracked, perhaps. Give my love to Dalrymple [the Doctor at the Norwich Lunatic Asylum], but with head and heart sound enough to value you, my dear Sir!"

In 1832 he proposed a second visit to Holkham, in company with Chantrey.

Christopher Hughes to Thomas William Coke.

"LONDON, *Sunday night*,

"*8th Nov.*, 1832.

"My dear Mr. Coke,

"I got to town only on Friday (the 2d Nov.) it would have suited my plans to remain in London still a few days; but whose plans can equal those of the great artist? I wrote to Mr. Chantrey, some days before getting to town, enclosing to him your 'remaining letter'; and saying that I should be happy to return to Holkham *with* him! I found a letter from him (for he is a practical man) ready and waiting for me at the Swedish Minister's, appointing me to appear at his studio yesterday at 2 o'clock; as I did with my son and young George Walgrave (the son of the Dissenter).

"I found at the immortal stone-cutter's Sir F. Burdett and some young ladies, whose faces were in admirable contrast with the Parian works and wonders of the artist. These 'Red Rover*as*' as I heard, were the daughters of the illustrious Baronet. They certainly are not Beauties! Chantrey introduced me to the stalwart Sir Francis; and he was civil—not *more* than civil—to my Yankee Excellency. I would not give *you* for a score of such men, and I'd throw

in a half-score of another very great Friend of yours, whom you idolize and I don't, and he (this last) is *not* the King . . . . . of Holland nor the Queen ! ! ! ! ! ! !

"Sir Francis' visit to Phidias was to arrange to go to Holkham in the same carriage ! Chantrey preferred *me*, and I prefer Chantrey ; so the *Majority* was against the Baronet, which *Crowned* my wishes and *Anchored* Sir Frank ! He, you know, respects the Majority—a good principle. Mr. Chantrey had a bed and all ready for me ; but, as I don't wish to repose in a Sarcophagus yet a while, I preferred sleeping at my own lodgings, and therefore he is to call for me on Tuesday morning the 6th, at 6 o'clock, and we sleep wherever he likes on the way (I hope it will be at some place that Mrs. Chantrey would approve). We stop ten minutes at Docking to see Charles[1] (who starts for school to-morrow evening, Monday, by 'Red Rover'), and we hope to be at Holkham on Wednesday morning the 7th by a quarter before ten o'clock.

"I shall write to Mr. S. by Charles and request him to order horses for us, that there may be no disappointment ; for as I have induced Mr. Chantrey to take the Lynn to Docking Road (on my account), he might *Hammer*, and *Chissel*, and *Cast* me if horses were not ready, to take us on, punctually. The amount of all this is I go with Mr. Chantrey ; and we hope to see you (may I find ye all as I left you !) on Wednesday next—before 10 o'clock.

"I gave my *lines* to Wenny's love (my little Margarette) on Friday morning, and I never could write straight without (or with) them ! Maggie was delighted with Lady Anne's letter ; and she dreams of Wenny and Baby and loves you *all!* She beats the Mansfield brood all hollow, they were all as much in love with her as Wenny was—and I think that will do ! As for Charles, everybody takes him for my brother (my *eldest* brother), no one will believe that he is not 15, and I doubt it myself. He is too grave.

[1] Charles John, eldest son of Christopher Hughes.

He was much happier and gayer with the noble Boys at Holkham! But he will soon be in the Good Neighbourhood, and as I shall soon be there also, I think I'll close my work!

"I passed an hour, to-day, with an old and most amiable friend—Joseph Bonaparte! He sent for me, and was as kind and unaffected as when I knew him in America. It is impossible to see a more good-hearted and gentle-mannered man! I have now known him and corresponded with him since 1815; and I have never known a more worthy private Gentleman or a kinder friend. He is the living image of his Great Brother; why is not HE also living? We cannot ask his executioners; for by an inversion of the usual order of Nature, the Executioner died before the condemned. Whose miseries were the greater? That is the question! The miseries of *the one* compelled him to be his own Executioner!—Mad! Faugh! I'll not believe it! King Joseph asked me to dine with him to-morrow; and I shall do so! He asked Charles also! I refused for Charles! He must to Docking to his Books (tell that to Tom and Edward; but they are very studious always). Now here I played the Yankee!!! Intentions of Kings are construed into orders; but we Jonathans do not understand *such orders!* nor any orders—but such as emanate from those whom we elect to command us! and when we find their orders uncomfortable, why we *elect others* in their places, and I believe that is the only and the real way of governing men; *id est*, let them govern themselves.

"Good night! God bless ye; and keep you *as you are*. With homage to Lady Anne; kind compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Stanhope and love to the blue-eyed baby,

"I am unalterably your friend,

"CHRISTOPHER HUGHES.

"N.B.—I have been, in fact, but one day in town, that is yesterday. So I have called on no one and

seen no one but the immortal Chantrey. I must reserve my round of visits to your great men (if I have time, which I doubt!) till my return; and my return must be very soon—I mean to London and then to Sweden.

"C. H. (as great a man as the best of them all. I like his natural manners! the true ones!)"

At the earnest request of Mr. Hughes, during this visit to Holkham, Coke accepted the guardianship of his young son, Charles John Hughes, aged fourteen, whom he intended to leave at school at Docking, in Norfolk. The satisfaction of Mr. Hughes on receiving Coke's consent was so great that he at once wrote off to inform Lafayette of the circumstance, and next found further employment for his indefatigable pen.

Christopher Hughes to Thomas William Coke.

"HOLKHAM, *November 14th*, 1832.

"My dear Mr. Coke,

"I have made copies of General Lafayette's letters to me and to my son, which were enclosed in the prefixed autograph of the noble-hearted Patriot (the affectionate friend to and Hero of both Worlds) to you, his true and consistent and constant fellow-labourer, in the great and glorious cause of free Principles, well-regulated Liberty, and the rights of your Fellow-men.

"They may, some years hence, be interesting reliques to your son; and may call to his recollection his Father's sincerely attached and devoted American Friend

"CHRISTOPHER HUGHES,
"U. States Chargé d'affaires
in
Sweden."

General Lafayette to Charles John Hughes.

"My dear Charles John,

"These lines are from your father's Friend, your Grand-Father's brother in arms, an affectionate Mourner for your excellent Mother. I want to congratulate you on the paternal guardianship such a man as Mr. Coke has very kindly accepted; it cheers my heart to join your own family in anticipation of the progress in your studies, and the future destinies that will mark you as one of the most worthy citizens of the United States; a mighty word, indeed, as it is the paramount country of wisdom, virtue and true republicanism. I partake in the parental gratitude for the kind Mr. Coke. My best wishes attend you, and I am most cordially,

"Your old friend,

"LAFAYETTE."

"LA GRANGE, *November*, 1832."

Extract from a letter of General Lafayette to Christopher Hughes at Holkham

"My dear Sir, "LA GRANGE, *Nov. 11th*, 1832.

"I thank you with all my heart for the friendly and interesting communications, the mere date of which would be with me a recommendation, for I am a great admirer of Mr. Coke. The personal and political information you give me have been highly welcome, in no point more than in the judicious temporary disposal of your children. The Vicinity of Holkham and kind attention of Mr. Coke seem to me a most happy circumstance of your son's life. I have taken the liberty to congratulate Charles John upon it.—I wish his name-sake[1] had thought a little of Finland during the Polish contest, nor did I

[1] Charles John—Charles XIV, King of Sweden, my son's godfather. —C. HUGHES.

refrain from a hint on the occasion; but received no answer. His sagacity must, however, warn him of the insincerity of legitimate professions and the fitness in his own case of European Emancipation.

"I will not dwell on Politics to one who knows how to read public papers; they tell more than volumes. Much debating is foreseen in the course of the month. But I hope from your affection to us and your dislike of the sea[1] that we shall meet; and that before it is over. I shall return to town on the 15th. Emily is gone this very day to Avignon, where my grand-daughter, Matilda Pusy, is on the point to make me for the tenth time, a Great-grand-father, so well her sister and cousin have already increased the family roll. Clementina is at last recovered from her tedious cholera convalescence. My son and the present inhabitants of La Grange charge me with their best thanks and regards.

"Your account of Mr. Coke, his Lady, Children and all Holkham life could not but inhance my great desire of a visit to him. But I am so much interwoven in public concerns of the times, that it is impossible for me to leave my Post. Among the enjoyments of a trip to Holkham, I feel much curiosity to see its fine farms, and that fine breed of Cattle, which I only know from the very acceptable but diminutive specimen given me by our friend Mr. Paterson, who had no patience to wait for a proper time of nubility; for it is not owing to Climate or pasture; as you know, the size of the American cattle is as large, if not larger than in Europe; forgive this digression of a farmer, instead of Belgian and Dutch Diplomacy; I consider these small cows are double keep-sakes. . . ."

Probably in consequence of this letter, Coke decided to send a Devon bull and two cows out to La Grange as a present to Lafayette. Thence arose a funny incident.—As Mr. Hughes was returning to

[1] That I should return to my diplomatic post at Stockholm over the Continent—as I should do.—C. HUGHES.

Stockholm via France the following year, Coke requested him to forward instructions from Lafayette respecting the shipping of these cattle. Lafayette, unaware of this, meanwhile sent full instructions to Holkham addressed to Mr. Hughes. His letter arrived after Hughes had left for the Continent, and Coke, not knowing that it contained an urgent message for himself, forwarded it to Brussels.

In Brussels, again, it arrived after Mr. Hughes had left, and was sent on by Adair, now Ambassador at the Court of Belgium, to Aix-la-Chapelle. From thence Hughes sent it back to Adair, intending him to forward it promptly to Coke; but Hughes having omitted to send any explanation with it, the mysterious communication caused Adair the greatest perplexity. Having pondered solemnly over it, he dispatched it with an official statement to the Foreign Office, which, in turn, after mature deliberation, failed to unravel the mystery. Finally, after all this commotion, Hughes' belated explanation reached Adair, who hastily sent it to the Foreign Office, whence it travelled to Coke, and was received by him just in time to prevent his present being sent astray.

The cattle thus arrived at La Grange in safety,[1] and were acknowledged by Lafayette in a delighted letter to Coke July 13th, 1833, in which he explains that, besides—

> "my great gratification to be under an obligation to you, I shall feel a high pride in showing this

[1] In the *Souvenirs de la vie privée du General La Fayette,* published 1836, p. 234, we read how: "There are at La Grange from thirty to forty cows. Some are of the fine Normandy breed; two cows and a bull of the English breed of Devon were presented to La Fayette by the celebrated agriculturist M. Coke of Holkham. Some cows of the same breed were imported from the United States."

specimen of your kindness, along with the ivy which has been planted by our excellent friend Charles Fox, and which forms the first ornament of the Towers of La Grange."

This, the last letter of Lafayette to his unknown English friend, is written in a neat, almost microscopic, but remarkably firm writing, showing trace neither of age nor infirmity. Only a few months later Lafayette made his last public speech, and died in Paris the May following, in his seventy-seventh year.

As to Adair, who on this occasion had found cause to rue his acquaintanceship with Mr. Hughes, he appears, even before that event, to have discovered reason for complaint at an introduction which he owed to Coke. The "Knight of the Woeful Countenance" thus expresses himself with regard to the too facetious descendant of "Martimus Scrib":—

Extract from a letter from Sir Robert Adair to T. W. Coke.

"Brussels, *Feb.* 15*th*, 1833.

"Your friend Hughes has just passed through Brussels in his way to Stockholm. I was happy to make his acquaintance and to show him what civility I could. He is a pleasant man for a little while, but gets tiresome before long; and he is dreadfully so with his letters, which are long and frequent. However there is much good in him."

Adair, as will be remembered, had, in 1831, accepted the special mission to Brussels to acknowledge Coke's old friend, Prince Leopold, King of Belgium, and also to settle the terms of separation with Holland. When

offered this, he was assured, he tells Coke, that the mission would not last three months; but it proved a task far more lengthy and intricate than he had been led to anticipate. "God knows when I shall see you all again," he wrote to Coke after he had been abroad two years, "for there seems no end to the business for which I came. All I can say is that I am doing my best to keep you out of war, for if war breaks out now, you may rely upon it that the last and all former wars will be a joke to it."

How well he accomplished his object and averted a European war is a matter of history, but his success was greatly simplified by the fact that Coke, at his request, gave him a personal introduction to Leopold, whom, curiously enough, Adair had never met while in England. That link of a joint friendship for Coke and a joint reminiscence of happy days spent at Holkham enabled the Ambassador and the newly-fledged sovereign to arrive speedily at a good understanding, which even the friction of politics failed to dissipate. "We talked a great deal about you yesterday," Adair says in more than one letter to Coke, after a conversation with the King; and this bond between the two men, so unexpectedly brought together, bred between them something of genuine affection. "Leopold," in short, Adair pronounced to Coke, "has many excellent qualities, and if he would only trust a little more to himself, he could do much more for the benefit of his country than the wrongheads who surround him will allow him to do!"

As to Leopold, personally, whenever the annual shooting season came round with its reminiscence of

pleasant days in the covert at Holkham, his thoughts turned sadly to that hospitable English home which he feared he might never again see.

> "This time of year," he wrote to Coke, "always brings back the truly gratifying recollection of your constant kindness to me. I was particularly fond of my visits to Holkham, and regret very much that there should be so little prospect of my again enjoying a repetition of such pleasant doings. Who can tell, however? The distance is not so very great, and when I lived last summer on the shores of the North Sea, it put me very much in mind of the Norfolk Coast. . . . Pray do not quite forget me."

Meanwhile, from time to time, to the land of exile came news from far-away Norfolk, which the two men exchanged eagerly; news which, on one occasion, at least, roused the envy of Adair. But before dealing with this, we must glance back to the days while the Reform Bill still dragged on its course.

CHAPTER XXXIII

RETIREMENT FROM ACTIVE LIFE

1831–1837

Ætat 77–83

COKE had always intended to make the passing of that Bill the occasion of his retirement from public life; but before its triumph was ensured, he had received the following letter from Lord Grey :—

"*Private.* "DOWNING STREET,
"*August* 30*th*, 1831.

"My dear Coke,

"I am not without fear that what I am about to say may not be agreeable to you, and yet I cannot incur the risk of losing an opportunity of doing what you may wish.

"I had always thought that you not only did not desire but would refuse a Peerage if offered to you, till our poor friend, Lady Spencer, a short time before her death, told me that I was mistaken in this opinion.

"I kept what she had said, therefore, in my mind till an opportunity of consulting your wishes on that subject might offer. It is probable, though I have not yet any authority from the King to say so, that some Peers may be made at the Coronation. If this should happen, and it should be your wish, yours would be the first name that I should propose to his

Majesty on this occasion. Pray let me have an answer as soon as possible, and if, in making this communication, I should not have done what is agreeable to your feelings, I must trust to your excusing it on the ground, which I am sure you will be satisfied is the only one on which I should venture to take such a step, of its being prompted solely by a desire to mark the respect and attachment with which a long connection, both public and private, has inspired me. I could not help offering our dear old friend, the Bishop of Norwich, the vacant Arch-Bishoprick of Dublin. I had not, certainly, much hope that he would accept it, but I wished him to know how sincerely I desired, both for the sake of the Church and to mark my veneration for him, to place him in a situation which nobody, had his age permitted, could have been so well qualified to fill.

"I am, with great regard,

"Ever most truly yours,

"GREY."

Thomas William Coke to Earl Grey.

"HOLKHAM,

"*Sept.* 1*st*, 1831.

"My dear Grey,

"Absence from home prevented me from returning an immediate reply to your Lordship's most gratifying, friendly, and truly delicately worded letter, offering to name me to His Majesty, if it should be my wish to accept a Peerage, provided Peers were to be made at the Coronation.

"I now trouble you by stating that in the year 1778 Lord North offered to make me a Peer, and when the Duke of Portland joined Mr. Pitt, he did the like; and in 1806, when Fox came into Power, he wrote me a similar letter to your own, when he made my son-in-law, Lord Anson, a Viscount.

"My ambition at that time was to continue the

representation of Norfolk and to reserve my attachment to Mr. Fox and his principles, by not forsaking him in the House of Commons. But the case is now different; every measure for which I was most eager will be completed upon the Reform being carried; I have now sons, and feel, as a father, I should not be justified in refusing your offer, if His Majesty would be pleased to confer the high honour of the Earldom of Leicester upon me. In truth, my dear Grey, I have no personal wish for the distinction, but as my poor dear friend Lady Spencer used to remind me that I should be unpardonable to refuse to ask for this, if a peerage should be offered to me, a distinction I would sooner receive from your Lordship than any man alive.

"I have the honour to remain, my dear Grey,

"Your grateful and obliged friend,

"THOMAS WILLIAM COKE."

This letter has a special interest, in that it places beyond all question Coke's attitude with regard to the acceptance of the proposed peerage, a matter which was subsequently much discussed. Undoubtedly he valued his position as first commoner in the kingdom too highly to part with it willingly. "I was born a Commoner, I have lived a Commoner, and I will die a Commoner," he had said in 1802, and he never altered this desire. It is still related in Norwich how he used to say that he "chose to be head of the Commons, not tail of the Peerage." But the stress of circumstances, the recognition that his public career was drawing to a close, that he had now sons to succeed him, not only overruled his inclination, but another consideration, unquestionably, carried weight. He had never for-

given the slight put upon him by Pitt in bestowing the earldom of Leicester upon the Townshends—a creation which still existed, and which necessitated his suggestion that the words *of Holkham* should be added to his proposed title. To wipe out the affront of Pitt's action, to restore to his family the title won by the ability of his great uncle, and which he, personally, had been unable to inherit with the estate, was a powerful incentive in inducing Coke to pen his acceptance of Lord Grey's offer.

This is borne out by the following anecdote. In Yarmouth, at this date, there lived a printer called Barnes, an ardent Whig, with whom Coke, when passing through the town, used occasionally to discuss current events in the political world. During the election time of 1835 he was talking one day to Barnes, and remarked, "I have no objection now, Mr. Barnes (as I have been represented to have), to taking a peerage, *as such*, but I am determined to accept no other title than that of Earl of Leicester, as borne by my father's maternal ancestor, the late Earl. I might, some years since, have been made Baron Holkham, or Baron Coke of Holkham, but then I should have been the youngest creation of the lowest rank of the peerage, and, Mr. Barnes," he added, laughing, "I had rather remain *the first of the Ducks than the last of the Geese!*"[1]

[1] This conversation was listened to by J. F. Barnes, son of John Barnes, who sent this story to the *Eastern Express* in 1898. He says: "This made a great impression on me as a boy of nine, and I remember it well. Besides, I often heard my father, during the short remainder of his life—he died in 1837—repeat the words of Mr. Coke as quoted above."

But, by a strange irony, the man who had five times previously rejected a peerage,[1] found that on the first occasion when he contemplated accepting it, the offer was withdrawn. Creevey, writing November 9th, 1834, professes to give the explanation of this.

> "Lord Grey told me yesterday that the applications made to him for peerages had been over three hundred, and for baronetages absolutely endless. . . . Lord Grey told me that it was one of the first acts of his Government to offer Coke a Peerage—absolutely an earldom—and Coke had chosen for a title 'Castleacre,' an estate purchased by the Lord Chief Justice Coke, joining Holkham; but just before our William came to the throne, Coke, at a dinner given him at Lynn, had made a most violent speech against George the Third, pointing to his picture which was in the room, and calling him 'that wretch covered with blood' (meaning, of course, from the American and French wars), an insufferable speech, particularly of a dead man; so that all the Royal Family were in arms about it. The King put it to Lord Grey whether, after such an attack upon his father, he could confer this signal mark of favour upon him, and Grey thought not."[2]

Creevey's self-righteous indignation at Coke's "insufferable speech" might provoke a smile in view of the usual nature of Creevey's own comments upon his fellow-creatures; and, as sometimes occurred, Creevey was not wholly accurate in his gossip. Coke's speech at Lynn had taken place after, not previous to, the accession of William IV, neither did Coke, from the first, ever contemplate taking the title of Castleacre, though it may have been suggested to him as one

[1] Three formal offers and two private attempts at bribery.
[2] *Creevey Papers*, Vol. II, p. 294.

which was suitable. In the main, however, Creevey's information was correct. Little as King William harboured any personal resentment towards Coke for the famous *lapsus linguæ* speech, the remembrance of it was fresh in the minds of others, and would have made it well-nigh impossible for the King to confer public honours upon the man who had so recently spoken disparagingly of the King's father. The question of a peerage was, therefore, allowed to remain in abeyance; and Coke of Norfolk, to his secret satisfaction, quitted Parliament bearing the same name with which he had entered it fifty-six years before.

On December 15th, 1832, the 'Veteran Patriot,' as he was called, took his formal leave of the county of Norfolk. At seventy-eight years of age, he announced that, having lived to see the adoption of all the great measures which he had most at heart, and for which he had earnestly laboured—the Trial by Jury, the Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, Catholic Emanicipation and the remodelling of the representation — all measures which tended to the freedom and unity of the Nation—he felt that the moment had arrived for his retirement from public life.

"During a long Parliamentary career," he said in his farewell address, "I have endeavoured to uphold on every occasion the liberty and true interests of England; the freedom of mankind in general, and the Constitution of my Country. Those are the points I said I would support: I have done so without profit to myself, without asking a single favour. I have served you independently to the best of my ability."[1]

[1] Speech, December 15th, 1832.

The Duke of Bedford to Thomas William Coke.

"My dear Coke,

"I have just seen in the papers your farewell address to the County of Norfolk, and I assure you I have read it with mingled feelings of regret at your taking leave of publick life and of the highest respect for the many virtues which have adorned your political career. Long may you enjoy in private life and in the bosom of your family that *otium cum dignitate* to which you are so eminently entitled. We fought together for some years, side by side in the House of Commons, in the cause of liberty, and you have now the satisfaction of witnessing in a great measure the triumph of that cause.

"The death of one who is near and dear to us both removed me to another House, where I have still fought in the same cause for thirty years. Tavistock, who is younger and abler than me, is about to be called up to that House. I have a young one of the name of Charles James Fox Russell (christened just after the death of our poor friend) who aspires to succeed him in Bedfordshire. I shall be proud to present him to you, and although I cannot ask you to take so long a journey, should he be honoured with your vote on his first entrance into the House of Commons, it will be a feather in his cap.

"I need say no more to you. Should you come into Bedfordshire, I flatter myself I shall see you at Woburn. Tavistock will be here. Remember me kindly to Lady Anne, and believe me always, my dear Coke, with the truest regard and attachment,

"Your faithfully and affect'ly,

"BEDFORD.

"*December 6th*, 1832."

Sir Robert Adair to T. W. Coke.

"BRUSSELS, *January 28th.*

"A thousand thanks, my dear Coke, for your pheasants, which, as usual, beat any that can be shown against them, except the Bohemian ones, and those there is no getting here. The Bohemian pheasants, too, except on some very particular estates, are never fat like yours.

"I envy your retreat from Politicks, and when I can finish with the wrongheads of all classes and countries, with whom I have now to do, I shall certainly follow your example.

"Can I do anything for you here in the Agricultural way? My best friend in this country is a Baron Hooghoorst, who was once in correspondence with you on those subjects, and has a beautiful farm (I mean beautiful in the sense you would have it) close to Brussels, which he works at himself. He, I am sure, would be too happy to answer any questions you would like to ask. Leopold and his charming little wife[1] are quite well, and he would like nothing so much, he assures me, as bringing her to see you at Holkham. Perhaps this may still be.

"With affectionate regards to Lady Anne,

"Believe me

"Ever truly yours,

"R. ADAIR."

By a curious coincidence, at this very date, Coke's disinterested service of his country was publicly called in question in a manner of which, for a considerable time, he disdained to take any notice. It will be remembered that he purchased the lease of Dungeness

[1] Leopold married, August, 1832, Marie Louise, eldest daughter of Louis Philippe.

Lighthouse from the Government, and how he rebuilt the lighthouse at his own expense, so that from being the worst upon the coast, it became the best. In 1828 that lease expired, and the Trinity House Brethren were anxious to secure it; but the Government, unsolicited, again offered it to Coke, on condition that he would give it up in twenty years' time. This Coke agreed to, so that, as he afterwards pointed out, the lighthouse again became his private leasehold property, although, balancing his outlay against his receipts in connection with it, his ownership of it was a better bargain for the Government than for himself.[1]

Despite this, a rumour was started that, in acting thus, Coke had been steadily enriching himself at the expense of the nation. The rumour grew, and still Coke ignored it. So universally was it believed, that an American who journeyed to England at this date in a sailing ship named the *Hannibal*, and who sojourned in London during the months of November and December, 1833, makes special mention of it in his account of his experiences, published ten years later,[2] and after stating that the money paid by his own and other ships for the light at Dungeness "make up for Mr. Coke of Norfolk the pretty purse of £4000 or £5000 a year," he adds sarcastically, "Yet the world's estimation proclaims Mr. Coke just, generous and a patriot!"[3]

[1] *An Account of the Dinner to Mr. Coke, upon his Retirement from the Representation of the County.* Printed and sold by J. Dawson, Norwich, 1833, p. 31.

[2] *The American in England.* By A. Stidell Mackenzie. Published 1843.

[3] After describing the light at Dungeness, he says: "If, however, it were nearly as brilliant as the sun, it was not by any means so cheap. I forget how much the *Hannibal* had to pay each voyage for this Dunge-

That Coke, whose whole life had been one long protest against the misapplication of public money, should be himself accused of the very offence which he had so persistently decried, would be, one might imagine, gall and wormwood to a man of his temperament, as it was certainly a cause of open rejoicing to his opponents. But in his fifty-six years of public life, Coke had weathered and ignored many calumnies; and he did not condescend to disprove so unexpected a slur upon his integrity even when a libellous statement was publicly uttered with regard to it. "Two years ago," we find him remarking in 1833, "a person of the name of Newton charged me with receiving large sums for Dungeness; *this I scorned to notice!*"[1]

For a time the name of "The Mighty Dungeness" almost superseded that of the "Dictator" amongst his Tory opponents; and at length, the rumour respecting this matter reaching the House of Commons, a question was asked relating to it by

ness Light; but I well remember that she and other ships make up for Mr. Coke of Norfolk the pretty purse of £4000 or £5000 over and above the annual expense of maintaining this light. I was told, moreover, that Mr. Coke, whose name is familiar to me among the distinguished Englishmen of the day, was an individual of enormous patrimonial wealth, of elevated character, and honourable estimation in the land. He had repeatedly declined being called to the peerage. He was a great patriot. . . . I think in declining to be called 'My Lord,' Mr. Coke might very consistently have put back this dishonourable subsidy, the want of which to him would have involved the abridgement of no luxury, but which is felt oppressively as added to the burdens of merchants, shipowners, and masters, toiling, economising, and exposing themselves to become owners also."

[1] See speech by Coke in *An Account of the Dinner to Mr. Coke on the Occasion of his Retirement from the Representation of the County*, published Norwich, 1833.

Mr. Hume,[1] who stated positively that Coke was receiving £8000 from Dungeness, and £4000 from Harwich lighthouses. Even then Coke did not hasten to reply to the imputations; he appears to have waited until his detractors had exhausted their utmost eloquence in deprecation of such conduct; and then with undisguised contempt, he came forward with statistics. With regard to accepting the leasehold from the Government—"the offer," he said, "was made to me; I did not seek it; I made no conditions, and I aver it was a good bargain for the Government that I did so!" and he proved how all that he had received in reimbursement of his heavy outlay for the good of the public had been £2000 from Dungeness. "So you see," he summed up, quoting Mr. Hume's remarks, "how correct were the calculations of that muddle-headed fellow!"[2]

While this matter was undergoing public discussion, Norwich was much exercised how best to do justice to the event which had roused Adair's envy.

> "The retirement of a man like Mr. Coke from public life," announced the *Norwich Mercury*, "bears the same analogy to his county that the termination of the reign of a patriot King bears to the nation whose rights he has protected, whose interests he has encouraged, whose prosperity he has reared and established. We mean not to exaggerate Mr. Coke's character by likening his position to regal power,

[1] Joseph Hume (1777–1855), a celebrated political philosopher, who advocated many reforms then accounted radical, and was noted for his meanness in money matters. He sat for Weymouth, Aberdeen, Middlesex, Kilkenny and Montrose. In one of H.B.'s caricatures, the whole House is represented as asleep, and Hume with one eye open.

[2] *An Account of the Dinner to Mr. Coke upon his Retirement from the Representation of the County*, p. 31.

yet he exercised a sway over the political circumstances and agricultural advancement of Norfolk scarcely less than a monarch restrained by constitutional laws exerts over a free people."[1]

This being so, Norfolk decided that the occasion could only fittingly be celebrated by the time-honoured tribute of a public dinner. Lord Suffield was charged with the arrangements, and wrote to the Duke of Sussex to ask His Royal Highness to preside at a great banquet the following January or Easter. The Duke, being seriously unwell, sent word that he chose the latter date, when he hoped to pay this tribute "to the principles which have distinguished and identified the long life of Mr. Coke with the liberties, prosperity and greatness of the British Empire."

On Friday, April 12th, Norwich was once more *en fête*. The arrangements on this occasion were far more elaborate than any which the town had previously witnessed. Every street was gay with bunting and flags; each house tried to outdo its neighbour in the extravagance of its tribute to the man of whom all felt that the county had a right to be proud. In St. Andrew's Hall the arrangements received special attention. "Every preparation is made in the best manner for the great occasion. Four tables are laid in the hall, very elegantly decorated. At the upper end a gallery covered with crimson cloth extends crescent-wise across the part elevated above the general level. This, it is expected, will be filled by the ladies of the county, as will the tables by the noblemen, gentlemen and yeomen to whose regard the character of Mr. Coke

[1] *Norwich Mercury*, April 20th, 1832.

is so dear."[1] Further, a triumph of decorative art, at the top of the hall, a life-sized transparency of King William was placed, shrouded by a green baize curtain, to be withdrawn when the psychological moment arrived. Norwich was determined that if King William could not grace the festivity with his bodily presence, at least the illusion of his doing so should be as complete as possible.

Soon after noon soldiers lined the streets, and the principal shops were closed. At four o'clock Coke entered the city, accompanied by Lord Lynedoch. As he drove up Castle Hill—the land which twenty-seven years before he had procured for Norwich—the crowds who filled the wide thoroughfare pressed forward, so that the carriage was forced to move at a foot's pace, and, more than once, was brought to a standstill. Near St. Andrew's Hall the mass of people became so great that it was with difficulty the soldiers and police kept them back. The whole city seemed to be ringing with cheers. And in that moment there must surely have been present to Coke's memory the many stirring scenes which the old city had witnessed during the long years of his public life, not the least dim being the memory of that day, nearly fifty-seven years before, when, as the youngest member of the House, he had been borne through another cheering crowd, the greater number of whose voices Time had since hushed in death. Stepping from his carriage, it is said that he cast one last glance round at the multitude who greeted him; and then, apparently deeply moved, passed on into the hall.

[1] *Norwich Mercury*, April 13th, 1833.

There five hundred guests were already assembled, and shortly afterwards the Duke of Sussex arrived, while Lady Anne, with her young sons, appeared in the gallery. When the first toast of "The King!" was given, the green baize curtain was withdrawn, and the transparency of His Majesty King William IV, crowned with laurels and smiling blandly upon the proceedings, produced, we are told, "a very pleasing and brilliant effect." When the toast of "Lady Anne and the Children of Holkham!" was given, Lady Anne, from the gallery, acknowledged it by a sweeping curtsey. At length, dessert being placed upon the table, the Duke of Sussex arose and proceeded to preface the toast of the evening with a long speech. To reproduce this here would be but to recapitulate what has already been said, clothed afresh in the emphatic and eulogistic language of the Duke; for his speech was in substance a careful sketch of Coke's career from the moment when, as a youth, the latter had taken his stand against injustice to America, to that culminating triumph represented by the passing of the Reform Bill, for which he had laboured indefatigably, showing how—

> "Ever since the year 1776, through good and evil report, he had been constantly defending the rights and privileges of the people in defiance of the Tory party and corrupt practices, against the ill-advisers of the Throne and against those acts from which have proceeded the evils we suffer."

Next, turning to Coke's private career, the Duke described how, on succeeding to his property, Coke was possessed of "a splendid habitation and magnificent estate," but "although he had a splendid

mansion, numerous pictures, valuable statues and a still more valuable library, the estate was little short of a rabbit warren," and he then dwelt in detail on all that Coke had accomplished in the agricultural world. "To be asked to pay a tribute to such a patriot I consider a high compliment," said the Duke in conclusion; and ending a speech of more than an hour's length, he proposed the health of Mr. Coke, "The long-tried and conscientious advocate of the people's rights, and the active and uniform promoter of the public good."

The applause was so deafening and prolonged that it was some time before Coke could reply. When he did so, he, too, glanced very briefly over his past life, he touched upon his feelings upon first entering Parliament, his distrust of Toryism, his hatred of the corrupt practices of the Government, his profound respect for the integrity and principles of Mr. Fox. He referred, as usual, to the fallacy of Mr. Pitt's promises with regard to the great questions—Trial by Jury, the Repeal of the Test Acts, and Catholic Emancipation. "The Duke of Wellington carried the Repeal of the Test Acts and Catholic Emancipation against his consent, and I supported him. His Grace did not believe that Reform could be carried, and so went out, but, thank God, that is carried too. I thought therefore that I could not make my bow at a better time than at that period which saw the consummation of the objects of my political life." Only once into his speech crept a more personal note. Referring to the calumny respecting Dungeness recently brought forward in the House of Commons, he made one boast with regard to his years of public service—a boast often afterwards

quoted as representing the epitome of Coke's public career—"*I have never touched a farthing of the public money—my hands are clean!*"

Many farewell speeches followed ere Norfolk had expressed its "Farewell compliment to one of the faithfullest and most honest political characters that ever held a seat in the Commons House of Parliament." "What a day of honest pride to Mr. Coke!" exclaimed Dr. Booth, a noted American scientist, in a letter to Dame Pleasance Smith,[1] after he had read the account of that farewell; "human life, human ambition have nothing to aim at beyond the triumph of that day. I bow before Mr. Coke's public and private virtues, and render him all my homage!" But Coke's appreciation of the consummation of human ambition may have been tempered by the fact that the proceedings on this occasion extended over seven and a half hours, and that, having arrived in Norwich at four o'clock in the afternoon, it was half-past eleven at night when he finally entered his carriage for the long drive back to Holkham, after what must have been a most exhausting ordeal.

> "The last post," wrote Adair from his exile in Brussels, "brought me the account of the dinner at Norwich. I cannot describe to you my feelings on reading it. My whole heart was with you, and I believe I committed the very undiplomatic sin of crying like a child. Well, God send that we may all meet again, and that soon, for I am dead sick of this concern."

As to King William, it was reported in Norfolk how the good-natured monarch was very genuinely

[1] Lady Smith was always so called after her husband's death.

annoyed that, owing to the peculiar circumstances, etiquette had forbidden his marking the retirement of his first Commoner by any public token of his royal recognition. Yet, in his hearty desire to please, it appears that His Majesty was occasionally betrayed into actions which reveal a delightful indifference to all such minor considerations. With regard to Lord Albemarle, for instance, who had not a drop of Scotch blood in his veins, His Majesty appears about this same date to have made a trifling *faux pas*. "You will laugh," wrote the Duke of Sussex privately to Coke, in 1833, "when I tell you that the King took Albemarle by surprise and has made him a *Knight of the Thistle*. I do not think the Members of the House enjoyed it, but it could not be helped!"

One other of Coke's friends had keenly regretted being unable to participate in the tribute which Norwich paid to his retirement; extreme weakness prevented the good old Bishop of Norwich from taking part in the public festivity; but upon hearing the farewell which Norfolk was preparing for his friend, he wrote quaintly to express his own point of view: "I am sometimes vain enough to hope," he suggested—

> "'That when along the stream of Time, your name
> Expanded flies, and gathers all its fame,
> *My* little bark may in attendance sail,
> Pursue the triumph and partake the gale!'

At all events, I more than hope that in Norfolk this will hereafter be the case!"

Two years before the date of this letter, in 1829, the Bishop had realised that his strength was failing

visibly. "The lamp is going out, but it burns brightly to the last!" he wrote placidly to Coke, employing a simile afterwards applied to Coke himself. Convinced, however, that the end of life was imminent, the Bishop had that year sent to Coke a pair of Irish shirt buttons which had been the gift of his wife, "of one with whom," as he touchingly explains, "I passed three-and-forty years as happily as human life admits of, and whose memory I love and revere every day more and more. . . . She is now dead, and when I turn over in my mind the list of those who (next to her) are most dear to me, no one occurs to me so frequently as yourself." And, gratitude still dictating his thoughts, in another letter he exclaims, "My very dear and best friend, if, as Milton says:

> 'The grateful mind
> By owing owes not, but still pays, at once
> Indebted and discharged,'

we are quits, and I feel assured that you will accept this poetical payment from one who has no other method of payment for the innumerable debts which he owes you!"

Yet neither age nor weakness could diminish the buoyancy of the Bishop's temperament; even when giving, as he believed, his dying gift to his friend, his irrepressible vitality triumphed. "My spirits are so good!" he exclaimed at the end of what had purported to be an announcement of his approaching dissolution, "that I still anticipate with glee the pleasure I shall have in playing a rubber of Whist with you during the course of the summer!" And no doubt this anticipation

was often realised, for, four years later, he was still able to enjoy the "Noble Game," about which he had been so much maligned, and in his ninety-first year he penned the following letter to Holkham :—

"My dear and best Friend,

"Were I punctually to acknowledge the innumerable marks of kind attention which I receive from you, I should be a very troublesome correspondent instead of being what I really am, and as certainly ought to be, a very grateful friend; it will, however, give you pleasure to hear, now and then, that I continue free both from pain of body and uneasiness of mind, and as happy as I ever was in the course of my protracted life; this happiness is much increased by the *conviction* which I feel that in a future state and more perfect state of existence, I shall meet and *recognise* such a friend as you.

"It is my intention to leave Norwich about the tenth of October and repair to London; when, between a morning air in the park and the Noble Game in the evening (with some good old ladies who contrive to make me pay for my amusement), my hours will glide away very smoothly.

"Remember me cordially to Lady Anne; independently of my regard for whom, I value most highly for the large share she has in gilding the evening of your well-spent life. Adieu!

"Believe me most truly,

"Your greatly obliged and affectionate friend,

"HENRY NORWICH.

"NORWICH, *Sept. the tenth*, 1834."

Yet, to Coke's regret, the Bishop expressed himself unfit to come to Holkham on an occasion when his presence was particularly desired. The Duchess of Kent at this time was fond of taking Princess Victoria

Augn Edouart, fecit, 1829

BATHURST, BISHOP OF NORWICH

to visit her prospective subjects—a practice of which King William did not approve. In 1833 Coke wrote to request the honour of a visit from the Duchess and the young Princess, and received the following reply from Sir John Conroy :—

"My dear Sir,

"The Duchess of Kent lays her commands on me to thank you for your attention.

"Her Royal Highness is exceedingly gratified by Lady Anne's and your message; she desires me to assure you both it will not be her fault if she does not visit Holkham next year, and have the happiness of finding herself and the Princess Victoria under your friendly and hospitable protection.

"Believe me, always, my dear Sir,

"Yours very faithfully,

"JOHN CONROY.

"KENSINGTON PALACE, *Dec. 28th*, 1833."

Fate, however, intervened to frustrate the Duchess's intentions. In the spring of 1834 Coke was taken so seriously ill in London that for a time his life was despaired of. Sir Henry Halford, who saw him daily, thought very gravely of the case; but Dr. Chambers, the other physician in attendance, a man of lesser fame but of shrewd insight, believed in the patient's ultimate recovery. The two physicians, however, differed not only in their opinion of the illness itself, but in the treatment they advocated; and Coke, contrary to all precedent, felt little confidence in the prescriptions of the great Court physician. Lady Anne, who shared her husband's views, thus found herself confronted by an awkward dilemma. If she acted on her own initia-

tive and dismissed Sir Henry, in the event of a fatal termination to the illness, the blame of her husband's death would be laid upon her interference. Yet, fully alive to the risk she ran, with her usual determination of character she did not hesitate. She wrote decisively to Sir Henry, and told him that she wished to take the case out of his care and place it unreservedly in that of Dr. Chambers.

The astonishment and indignation of the famous doctor may be imagined, and there were many who shared his opinion of Lady Anne's folly. But the event justified her action. Coke regained strength slowly and by July 15th he could write:—

> "I am recovering from a long and protracted illness. . . . Dr. Chambers has asked me to leave town on Wednesday next, upon condition that I take a physician with me to Holkham; and I have had the good fortune to prevail upon Dr. Rigby to go—the son of our old friend Dr. Rigby of Norwich."

Thus the man whose father had given world-wide fame to the agriculture of Holkham, now found himself established at Holkham as resident physician; and under his care the cure commenced by Dr. Chambers was happily completed. But Coke, who understood all that Lady Anne had risked in acting as she had done, felt the keenest admiration for the courage and determination she had displayed at a critical juncture, and to which he believed that he owed his life. He never forgot it, and it was, as we shall see, one of his last thoughts when finally he lay upon his death-bed.

By 1835 his health was so entirely restored that there was no longer any reason to prevent the deferred visit

of the Duchess of Kent and Princess Victoria at last taking place. It was fixed for the following autumn; and accordingly, on September 22nd that year, the Princess and her mother drove through Lynn on their way to Holkham. They were in an open carriage drawn by four horses, with no military escort, and preceded only by a couple of outriders. At that time a number of navvies or "dykers," as they were called, were at work near the outskirts of the town. In an excess of loyalty these men rushed forward, stopped the royal carriage, and proceeded to take out the horses. The Princess, seeing herself surrounded by a crowd of rough men in a state of evident excitement, and, no doubt, having her mind stored with the tales of horror of the French Revolution, became very frightened, and clung to her mother in evident alarm. She was slightly reassured when she found that the intention of such a murderous-looking gang was merely to drag her carriage through the town; but the ordeal which followed was far from pleasant, for, so delighted were the dykers with their own loyalty, that, not content with dragging the carriage along its intended route, they insisted on pulling it in triumph all up Norfolk Street and through the principal streets of Lynn, making a complete circuit of the town; all the while followed by a crowd of shouting, enthusiastic riff-raff, who greatly enjoyed the incident. When at last after two hours they allowed the horses to be reharnessed, the Princess could not conceal her relief, which was augmented by finding that a guard of Yeomanry Cavalry was now prepared to escort her in safety on her way.[1]

[1] Related to the writer by an eye-witness.

This event, however, had occasioned a considerable delay, and at Holkham wonder began to be expressed that the royal visitors did not make their appearance. The dinner hour arrived and still they did not come. The Egyptian Hall was brilliantly lighted, and had been for a long time crowded with people all eager for a sight of their future Queen. Suddenly a carriage, escorted by a troop of cavalry, drove up, and three ladies were seen to be alighting. Coke, with a candle in each hand, advanced to greet them, and made a profound bow. When he resumed an erect position the objects of his homage had vanished. They were the dressers, who, not having been forcibly detained by the loyal inhabitants of Lynn, had arrived in advance.

At length the royal party made their appearance at Holkham, and expressed themselves delighted with their reception and with the house. Princess Victoria created a very favourable impression. She had a very pretty complexion, and without being actually good-looking, there was something distinctive and very attractive in her appearance. The verdict passed upon her was that she was "unlike any one else." Her voice was very musical and her manner very simple and unaffected.

Meanwhile, an unexpected incident had caused no little commotion. Lady Mary Stephenson's[1] little daughter Bessie was staying at Holkham with Margaret Coke. The two little girls had a nurse named Salmon, who, some time previously, unknown to any of the establishment, had clandestinely married one of the

[1] Lady Mary Keppel, third daughter of William Charles, 4th Earl of Albemarle, married in 1826 Henry Frederick Stephenson.

STATE BEDROOM AT HOLKH

RINCESS VICTORIA SLEPT

gardeners named Gervin. Being afraid that she would lose her place if it became known that she was married, she kept the fact a profound secret. But in the bustle and excitement consequent upon the royal visit, Mrs. Gervin, to her own confusion and to every one else's extreme surprise and consternation, gave birth prematurely to an infant daughter. Lady Anne having ascertained that the wedding had actually taken place, informed the Duchess of Kent of this unexpected result of her visit. The Duchess was greatly amused, and the Princess at once insisted upon seeing the baby, a microscopic specimen of humanity. At her especial request the infant was named after herself, and Victoria Gervin grew up to recount with pride the unusual circumstances of her entrance into the world, and of her early introduction to her future sovereign.

The morning following the arrival of the royal visitors, Margaret Coke, aged three, and her cousin Bessie Stephenson, aged four, were dressed in little white muslin frocks, which Lady Anne had recently embroidered for them in coral silk. Thus clad, they were sent hand in hand to the Duchess's room to inform her when breakfast was ready, a summons which must have presented some contrast to the ceremonious etiquette with which she was accustomed to be treated.

After breakfast, Princess Victoria wished to see the house. She showed great interest in her surroundings, and great appreciation of the statuary, pictures and articles of *virtu*. The missals in the muniment-room keenly interested her, especially one of the thirteenth century in a heavy gold and jewelled cover which is said to contain the bones of the Virgin Mary, St.

Peter and many other saints.[1] But she was still more delighted with the microscopic and probably unique missal, before mentioned, which Coke had purchased, and she could not sufficiently express her admiration of the delicate and minute work which it contained. Coke, however, did not, as she might have expected, present her with it. "I was not going to give it to a child like that who could not appreciate its value!" he said afterwards.

On the day of her departure, the Princess said she would like to say good-bye to Margaret Coke. When this message was brought up to the nursery, the young nurse who was in charge, in consequence of Mrs. Gervin's illness, was very flurried. The royal carriage was at the door, and there was not a moment to be lost. The nursery was the turret-room which Lady Mary Coke had once occupied, and was approached by a steep flight of stone steps. In hurrying down these the nurse let the child drop. She said nothing about it at the time, but some months afterwards an abscess formed on the child's hip-joint, which the doctor thought had been caused by some injury. Inquiry was made, and it was said that on the morning of the Princess's arrival, Margaret Coke had been playing with Bessie Stephenson upon the staircase where the workmen were putting down the red cloth for the royal visitor, and catching her foot in a portion which was still unnailed, she had fallen headlong and wrenched her hip. But at length the nurse became frightened and confessed.

[1] The inscription upon it is as follows: Hic continentur Rel' . S . Marie . V . S . Georgii M . S . Oswaldi . M . S . Bartholomei . S. Thome S . Petri . S . Pauli . S . Jacobi.

Later, one abscess formed after another on the injured limb, so that Margaret became lame for life, and most of her childhood was spent lying upon an invalid couch.[1]

The year previous to the visit of the Princess Victoria to Holkham, Lord Grey had resigned office in July, and Lord Melbourne had formed a short-lived Ministry. In the following November he was succeeded by Peel, who, in his turn, remained in office only until April 1835. At this juncture, the old Bishop of Norwich, in his ninety-third year and in a very feeble state of health, wrote to inform Coke that he intended to undertake the journey to London, even if he had to be carried thither on a litter, in order that he might take his seat for the last time in the House of Lords. He actually accomplished the journey, and having survived its fatigue, supported by Lord Plunkett he tottered up to the table of the House of Lords, and took the oaths in favour of the Government of Lord Melbourne. "It was a marvellously plucky act of the venerable and gallant old Bishop!" wrote Coke, and the Bishop's daughter relates how her father's courage was appreciated by "no one more than that old and dear friend Mr. Coke of Holkham." It proved, practically, the last public action of the Bishop's life. He died that same year, having first penned a letter to Holkham, in a hand weak with age and infirmity, but still active in the cause of friendship :—

"My dearest Friend,

"Affection, esteem and gratitude must have lost all influence upon the human heart before I can

[1] She married Sir Archibald Macdonald in 1849.

forget the Individual to whose unremitted kindness I am indebted for what has made my life happy, and my approaching departure from it comfortable.

"Yours most devotedly,

"HENRY NORWICH."

In the autumn of 1836, Lord Melbourne, now again Prime Minister, formed one of a party at Holkham which included Adair, returned from his exile in Brussels, Lord Spencer, Sir Ronald Ferguson, Lord John Russell, Mr. Stanhope, Sir C. Clarke and Chantrey. On the 5th of November—an ominous date—the reinstated Prime Minister appears to have met with an accident out shooting, for an entry in the game book records as part of that day's bag, "*A Prime Minister shot—Not Political!*" The damage Lord Melbourne sustained, however, if any, did not prevent his retaining office for the next five years, and thus becoming famous for ably assisting to inaugurate the longest and most prosperous reign which England ever witnessed.

In the year 1837 Coke was renting a house in Brompton, near the top of what is now Palace Gate. Almost annually, for the last ten years, he had taken a fresh house in London, the "comfortable house in Paddington" having long been abandoned for others which seemed more suitable or commodious. His present dwelling, commanding in the front a view of Kensington Gardens, was surrounded by fields and orchards; while the garden, in the midst of which it stood, was exceptionally spacious and beautiful, with a shady, secluded lawn, bright flower-beds and magnificent trees. Seated there early on the morning of June

20th, news was brought to him which confirmed the tolling bell of Kensington Church hard by: William IV was dead, and Coke's little guest of two summers before was become Queen.

Within a month of her accession he received a letter from Lord Melbourne on behalf of the young Queen.

Lord Melbourne to T. W. Coke.

"Downing Street,

"*July 18th*, 1837.

"My dear Mr. Coke,

"I am very much obliged to you for your letters upon the electioneering prospects in the County of Norfolk; but I have now another matter to write to you upon, and which I have some satisfaction in referring to you. It is unnecessary for me to go into any details of the circumstances which have hitherto prevented that which has been eagerly desired by the Whigs and expected by the whole Country, namely, your elevation to the Peerage. I have now the pleasure of acquainting you that I have Her Majesty's commands to offer you an Earldom and to accompany the offer by every expression of Her Majesty's personal regard and esteem.

"If this is agreeable to you, you have nothing to do but to send me back by return of post the titles which you are desirous of taking, and I can only add for myself that, if you accept this honour, it will be to me a source of great pride and satisfaction that it should have been conferred by my advice and under my administration. I beg to be remembered to Lady Anne.

"Believe me,

"My dear Mr. Coke,

"Yours ever faithfully,

"Melbourne."

T. W. Coke to Lord Melbourne.

"Holkham, *July 19th*, 1837.

"My dear Lord Melbourne,

"It is impossible for me adequately to express the high sense I entertain of this distinguished honour which the Queen is at your instigation disposed to confer upon me. And this mark of Her Majesty's favour is further enhanced by the gracious expressions with which the distinction is accompanied.

"You, my valued friend, will, I trust, give me credit for fully appreciating your kindness in this matter. In consideration of this Estate having descended to me from my uncle Lord Leicester, I should certainly prefer the Earldom of Leicester to any other, and to the title the words 'of Holkham' might be added. I propose that the 2nd title should be Viscount Coke, if a Barony is necessary, that of Colham in the County of Norfolk.

"Yours, etc.,

"Thomas William Coke."

Thus, after having been offered a peerage seven times, Coke was at length created Earl of Leicester. It was a curious coincidence that the first peerage created by Queen Elizabeth was an Earl of Leicester, whose nephew was Sir Philip Sydney, while the first commoner raised to the peerage by Queen Victoria was an Earl of Leicester, whose nephew by marriage was Lord De L'Isle, the representative of Sir Philip Sydney. It was, however, necessary that the words "of Holkham" should be added to Coke's title, since another earldom of Leicester was in existence—the one granted to the Townshends in 1784. That this was not altogether palatable to him is shown by the first letter

which Lady Anne wrote after his acceptance of the peerage, and which is addressed to Isabella Stanhope: "I sign my new name for the first time—Anne Leicester," she writes, and then adds: "You need never put *of Holkham!*"

Among the innumerable letters of congratulation which Coke received upon this event are the following:—

The Duke of Norfolk to the Earl of Leicester.

"My *dear Coke,* "FORNHAM, *July 23rd*, 1837.

"For I must once more call you by the name by which I have so long esteemed, admired, and loved you. Most sincerely do I congratulate you and Lady Anne upon the honours which have been so deservedly, tho' so tardily, conferred upon you. The foul insult attempted to be cast on you by Pitt is now for ever wiped away. And may the present auspicious era and the glorious Reign of Victoria speedily accomplish the destruction of the Tories and rescue the Nation from the disgraces and burthens imposed upon it by that same Pitt!

"But I will not trespass longer amidst the numerous congratulations pouring in from all your friends, so I conclude, with every kind wish of long-continued health and happiness to yourself, Lady Anne, and all your family, and remain, my dear Coke,

"Ever most truly yours,

"NORFOLK."

Lord Brougham to the Earl of Leicester.

"*Private.* "BROUGHAM,

"My dear Lord L., "*Thursday.*

"I ought long ago to have congratulated you on the dignity which has been given to you, or I should rather say which you have accepted, and

which ought to have been offered long before. But I really feel in your situation my congratulations would appear of a somewhat ambiguous nature, and that I ought rather to congratulate the *House of Lords* than you.

"I wish I could add my congratulations upon Norfolk elections; you see what an example we have set you in Cumberland.

"With my best respects to Lady Leicester,

"Believe me,

"Most sincerely yours,

"H. BROUGHAM."

Richard Rush to the Earl of Leicester.

"LONDON, *July* 22, 1837.

"*Portland Hotel.*

"My dear Sir,

"I have this moment first learnt from the *Morning Chronicle* of your call to the Peerage, and cannot resist the impulse I feel to offer my congratulations on an event so long and pre-eminently due to you (as far as a stranger may presume to speak) and now so worthily conferred by a young and gracious Queen.

"Asking permission to tender also my candid, cordial felicitations to Lady Leicester, I remain, ever my dear Lord, your attached and devoted friend of the other hemisphere,

"RICHARD RUSH."

A. Stephenson to the Earl of Leicester.

"My dear Sir,

"I was dining yesterday with Mr. Rogers, and I heard from Lord Langdale that you had that day been elevated to the British Peerage. Among the numerous friends that will doubtless hasten to offer you their congratulations on this epoch in your

life (for such it may be regarded) I shall be pardoned, I hope, though belonging to another Hemisphere, in asking permission to mingle mine, and express the cordial pleasure which this event has given both Mrs. Stephenson and myself. This honour comes to you, my dear Sir, at a time and under circumstances which leave you free to accept it from the hands of those by whom you would probably most wish that your public life should be approved, and without incurring the disapprobation of your friends. Indeed, conferred as it has been as a token of the gratitude of your party, for a long life of useful and patriotic service, all your friends must feel gratified at the manner and time in which it has been done. Few more so, I can assure you, than myself. I regard it as the offering of a grateful Country to an old and faithful public servant, who, after fifty years' service, relinquishes the arena, and hangs his arms upon the Post.

"God grant that you may long live to enjoy this honour, and see the triumph of the principles you have so long cherished, and that the evening of your life may be one of health and happiness.

"Mrs. Stephenson bids me present her kindest regards to Lady Leicester and yourself, in which I cordially unite, and am ever, dear Sir,

"Yours faithfully,

"23, Portland Place, "A. Stephenson.[1]

"*July 21st*, 1837.

"P.S.—I am on the wing for a few days to the country, and shall direct this to be sent to Norfolk, if, by enquiry at Brompton, my servant hears you are not to be in London, which is expected."

Amelia Opie to the Earl of Leicester.

"Respected and dear friend, "*Aug. 14th*, 1837.

"Allow me, though late, to offer thee my congratulations upon thy new dignity, but I must ven-

[1] American Minister at the Court of St. James'.

ture to add that in accepting the Earldom of Leicester thou hast in my opinion done honor to the *Peerage*. It could not confer additional honor on thee.

"We men and women of Norfolk loved and honored thee as 'The Squire,' and that was enough for us.

"But I give ample credit to the Queen and the Ministers for having made *such* an Earl of Leicester, and think *this* a promising beginning of the new reign.

"But alas! for Norfolk and Norwich!!!

"This is too painful a subject to dwell upon.

"I hope Lady Leicester is quite well, and that her fine hair is grown again to its wonted luxuriance—and am

"Respectfully and sincerely thine,

"AMELIA OPIE.

"8th Mo. 14th 1837."

At the Coronation, Sir Harry Keppel relates how he was present to see his sister Anne take her place amongst the peeresses, and join in the picturesque ceremony when all placed their coronets upon their heads, taking time from the young Queen.

Yours very Sincerely
Jno. Wm. Coke

HE WAS—
THE QUEENS BEST SUBJECT, AND THE PEOPLES FRIEND.

FROM A DRAWING MADE AT HOLKHAM, BY W.C. EDWARDS, IN 1824.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE LAST YEARS

1837–1842

Ætat 83–88

HIS brother, Edward Coke, having died, in 1837, Lord Leicester decided to visit Longford. The place had been allowed to fall into a shocking state of repair, and he wrote orders to his bailiff to do all that was necessary to make it habitable. The man explained that certain repairs to the building were essential, as the stonework was unsafe, but said he would see that all was put in order with as little delay as possible.

Accordingly, on hearing that the house was ready for habitation, Lord and Lady Leicester set out for Holkham, and travelling by easy stages approached Longford three days later. As the carriage turned the corner at the top of the hill above the park, Lord Leicester observed that, from the spot where they then were, the old castellated tower of the house below must be in sight; Lady Leicester looked, but declared that no tower was to be seen. Lord Leicester's own sight was too feeble to distinguish objects at a long distance, but he insisted that from the road where they were then driving the tower must be in view. Still, to his perplexity, Lady Leicester declared that she could not see

it. At last they reached the house, to find to their horror that the old tower was still invisible—it had been pulled down by the officious bailiff in preparation for their arrival!

It appears that the man fancied the stonework was no longer safe, and in his zeal to have everything in perfect repair before Lord Leicester's arrival, gave orders that the oldest part of the house was to be pulled down with the greatest expedition. After the work of destruction had been begun he must have become aware of, though it is doubtful if he ever appreciated the enormity of his error; for the old walls proved to be so strong that it was only with the utmost difficulty they could be pulled asunder. The destruction of the tower entailed the destruction of the fine old banqueting hall, which contained the carved gallery and the stained glass windows bearing the arms of the De Longfords from the time of the Conquest; but the work of desecration progressed all too rapidly, and soon an ordinary hall with oak beams and rafters replaced the old one. Subsequently, some of the fine panelling which had covered the old walls was given by Lord Leicester to Lord Talbot, and was at Ingestre Hall until destroyed in the fire there in 1882; so that to-day three seats made out of pierced oak which once formed the steps up to the gallery in the old banqueting hall are the only relics of it remaining at Longford.

Apart from the destruction of the centre of the house, and the fact that Chantrey was employed in designing and reconstructing the ceilings of the lower rooms, Longford was little changed since the days when Mr. Wenman Coke lived there. During those last years of

Lord Leicester's life, as he wandered again about the grounds which he had trodden when a boy, or drove through the quiet country lanes surrounding his former home, at every turn he must have been reminded of his early days. The village school was still standing where he had taken his first lessons with the little lads and lasses, so many of whom had now preceded him to the grave; the dairy looked unchanged since the dark mornings when he had made his frugal meal there in hot haste to start on his long day's sport; the roads, with their flowering hedges and shady trees, were the same which had witnessed his departure on his memorable visit to Holkham, his return from abroad, from his first canvassing, from his humiliating expedition to Newmarket. Like a dream the past must have been re-created for him—those vivid days of keen young life, the wooing and wedding of his sisters, long since dead, the ripening of his own far-away romance with the beautiful Jane Dutton.

Perhaps few men have drifted into old age with a mind as fresh and a nature as little changed since the days of youth. His love of sport was undiminished, his joy in a country existence as keen, his abhorrence of all intolerance as heart-whole. "Such as I have been, such I am, and such you will always find me," he once told his constituents; and this was realised in matters other than those to which the remark referred, and to an extent which he could not have foreseen. The hand of time touched him very lightly. We have seen how in in his seventy-seventh year his agricultural visitors were struck by his vigour of mind and body. The game book at Holkham records how in October, 1832, when he was

in his seventy-ninth year, out of twenty-five shots he killed twenty-four head. Two years later we find Leopold from Brussels writing as to a youthful enthusiast in sport, to beg—"You will have the goodness to let me know when you have again assembled round You our old shooting companions," and further lamenting, with the certainty of sympathy, his own sad loss of "the only exercise which we have in winter." In 1837, Creevey (whose testimony carries more weight in that, as before pointed out, he was not in the habit of over-estimating his fellow-creatures) described "King Tom" as "a marvellous man in everything"—a man whose physical and mental energy "burnt as bright as brightly to the last"; who, in his eighty-third year, could open a ball, shoot daily with sons who were younger than his grandsons by his first marriage, and tell reminiscences of an eventful life with a clearness and humour which could enthrall even an undoubtedly captious listener.[1]

Chantrey, too, was fond of rallying him upon his youthful vigour. A few years after the birth of Margaret Coke, her father took a miniature of his little daughter to the great sculptor in some perplexity. He had a case in which were miniatures of his four sons, and he found that he could not insert the

[1] "It was the usual Christmas ball for servants in the audit room. . . . The Earl of Leicester, aged 85 [*sic;* he was eighty-three] opened the ball. He is a marvellous man, but I think he is *going out*, tho' he burns bright as brightly to the last." [Creevey predeceased him by four years.] And again, a few days later: "Lord Leicester shoots daily; amongst other competitors are his three sons. The eldest, Lord Coke, aged 15, on Xmas day shot five woodcock, and always shoots from 30 to 40 head daily. . . . Lord Leicester is a marvellous man in everything, but above all, in his clear and perspicuous telling of stories, all of which he has in great abundance" (*The Creevey Papers,* Vol. I, p. 331).

miniature of his fifth child in this without disarranging the rest. "This case," he explained to Chantrey, "was planned for four only; what can I do with this fifth miniature?" "Do, my dear sir?" replied Chantrey; "why, start a similar case, and instead of making this Number Five in the old one, make it Number One in the new!" And it appeared as though this advice would be followed, for another son was born to him in 1836 when he was eighty-two years of age[1]—a son thus born fifty-eight years after the birth of Coke's first child in 1777.

Long after he had reached the age when a man's strength is said to become "a burden and a sorrow," his fictitious appearance of being in the prime of life was maintained. When he retired from public life, his portrait was painted by S. Lane for the City of Norwich, and on February 1st, 1833, was hung in the Corn Exchange. This portrait, painted when he was 78–79, appears to be that of a man fully twenty years junior to that age; yet that it was no flattering likeness seems proved by comparing it with a miniature painted shortly afterwards by a different hand, and also with the portrait painted by Haydon a few months later for his famous picture of the passing of the Reform Bill. In his Journal for May 16th, 1835, Haydon says: "Mr. Coke and Sir Ronald Ferguson sat. Mr. Coke's head is the finest I ever saw—the only one which I would chose for Aristides. This is a genuine unsophisticated opinion."[2] And, like Creevey, Rush, Chantrey and others, Haydon appears to have appre-

[1] Francis Motteau, born January 17th, 1835; died March 6th, 1836.

[2] *Autobiography and Journals of B. R. Haydon*, edited by T. Taylor, (1853), Vol. II, p. 376.

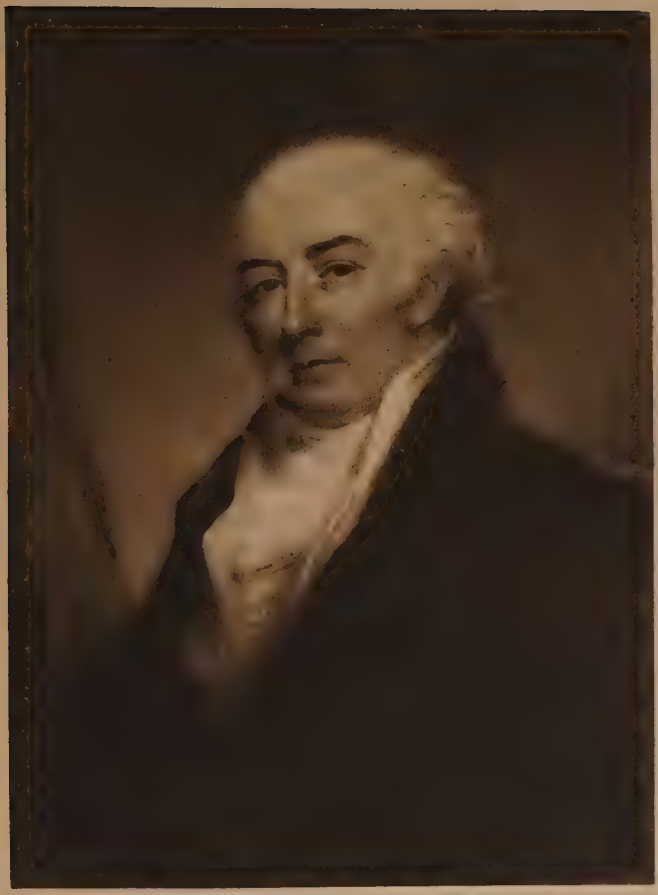
ciated the mental alertness of his sitter. "He told me some beautiful anecdotes of Fox," he observes; and again—"A most delightful sitting he gave me."

Neither did this unabated energy expend itself in a less practical manner than formerly.

In 1838 we find a note that "Lord Leicester is laying out £1400 on 405 acres of land to be cultivated for wheat at Holkham."[1] Many of the letters preserved by him about this date refer to fresh agricultural experiments. Even Leopold, with his stereotyped descriptions of Belgian agriculture, as well as Belgian sport, again contributes ample testimony to the fact that his correspondent was still unchanged. In the last letter extant from him to his old friend, when he wrote to congratulate Lord Leicester upon the attainment of an eighty-sixth birthday, he added the usual comment upon agricultural matters with evident knowledge that his correspondent's former interests were in no way abated; and further requested that, since he could not come to Norfolk personally, he might send Mr. Kinkin, "a sensible young man, who is the *régisseur* of my private domain in the country," to receive some valuable instruction from the octogenarian agriculturist at Holkham.

Nor was the continual improvement of the Holkham estate the only matter which was now occupying Lord Leicester's attention. No sooner had he resumed possession of Longford, than he devoted his thought to advancing the agriculture of Derbyshire as he had advanced that of Norfolk. He studied the mode of crop-

[1] The note explains that he is making an expenditure of £2 per acre for wheat-seed at four bushels the acre, and £2 per acre for fish manure.



Thomas William Coke

From a miniature in the possession of his Son the Hon.ble Henry Coke

ping and of cultivation practised there; he visited the farmers in their houses, carefully inspected their buildings, and urged upon them innovations and fresh effort. Only a week before his death an article appeared in the *Derby Reporter*[1] describing what he had already achieved in the county, and how (at eighty-eight!) he was "most anxious to improve the character of Derbyshire husbandry." During the last five years of his life, while he visited Longford annually, he built there six farm-houses, six almshouses, a fine school and six public bridges at his private expense.

In small matters as in great, moreover, the villagers profited by his constant anxiety to help them. Stories still linger at Longford which show how he was regarded as a friend to whom no trouble was too insignificant to be carried. One anecdote which has survived, illustrative of his ready kind-heartedness, is in itself trivial, but the sequel lends to it a curious interest.

In the village at Longford there lived a woman named Mrs. Wright, who had often worked at the hall. On one occasion when she had had a trifling illness, the "old lord," as he was invariably called, walked down to ask after her. In the course of conversation she confided to him how one of her great troubles was that her eyesight was so bad she could not see to read. He at once whipped off a pair of gold and tortoiseshell spectacles which he always wore, and passed them to her. "Try my glasses!" he suggested; and Mrs. Wright putting them on, found to her surprise that she could see perfectly. "Ah, well," remarked the old

[1] "A Visit to the Earl of Leicester's Farm at Longford" (*Derby Reporter*, June 23rd, 1842).

lord with great satisfaction, "you keep them—I can get myself another pair!" and in spite of her remonstrances, he made the best of his way home without the glasses which alone enabled him to see his way about.

Over sixty years afterwards, the present writer was taken to see Mrs. Wright, then past eighty years of age, when she related the story of how she had received the glasses which she was still wearing. I asked her if she would sell them to me. "Oh no," she said; "I can still see with them, and besides, I could never part with them while I live."

I never saw Mrs. Wright except on that one occasion, and I thought no more of the incident, till one day I received a packet containing the tortoiseshell spectacles, together with a piece of crimson velvet and one of black cloth carefully wrapped in paper yellowed by age. A letter accompanying the gift, explained that Mrs. Wright on her death-bed had sent for the bailiff, and had solemnly commissioned him to send the Earl's spectacles to his great-grandchild, whom she had seen once, together with two small cuttings—one of the crimson velvet which had covered the Earl's coffin, and one of the cloth which had lined it—relics which, having treasured all her life, she now wished to leave in the keeping of some one who would likewise treasure them when she was gone.

The villagers of Longford, however, who profited by their "new Squire's" quick sympathy and assistance, occasionally found it necessary to readjust their rustic ethics to a novel standpoint. Another story of him has survived, which is certainly characteristic. Walk-

ing one day near a plantation on the estate, Lord Leicester was accosted by one of his labourers. "My Lord," said the man, "I think it only my duty to inform you that some o' your men are over in the wood yonder taking your sticks." Lord Leicester stopped. "Indeed!" he said; "and why are you not with them?" "Because, m' Lord," said the labourer, "*I* am an honest man." "Stuff a' nonsense!" was the unexpected rejoinder. "Show me the men." Crossing the stile, Lord Leicester entered the wood, accompanied unwillingly by the informer, and went leisurely on till he came upon the party of trespassers collecting the fallen branches for firewood. "So you're stealing my firewood!" he said, walking into their midst. The men, caught in the act, sheepishly admitted this to be the case. "I am glad," said Lord Leicester promptly, "to see you so provident. You may all help yourselves to the branches, except"—he turned to the man who had given his comrades away—"except that lazy vagabond there!"

In fact, his anger at any hypocrisy in conduct or any meanness in speech, was as outspoken as in the days when, on first coming into possession of Holkham, he had publicly attacked the man whose political influence he ought to have courted, but whose character he despised. His detestation, too, of all narrowness of belief still found as open expression as did his quick sympathy with the reverse. When his brother-in-law, Tom Keppel, preferred to take his degree at college upon his own merits rather than rest upon the privileges of his rank as a peer's son, Lord Leicester warmly applauded this decision with all the enthusiasm

of his younger days. When Mr. Keppel took orders, he wrote to him, in 1838:—

"You are at perfect liberty to make use of my name and Purse to any extent your judgment may direct.

"The Established Church, speaking of them *as a Body*, I have, for years past, looked upon as the most illiberal, selfish, Bigoted and contemptible Body upon Earth, casting from their thoughts our Blessed Saviour's words: 'Peace and goodwill to all mankind.'

"The Low Church, as they are called, consists of such firm Christians as the Bishop [of Norwich] and Yourself, and very, very many others whom I honour as being the most liberal, Heavenly-minded men the Almighty ever created. Persevere, dear Tom, in these truly generous and Christian feelings to the end of your life, and you will be beloved as you deserve to be by all of your Cloth whose acquaintance and friendship is worth having.

"I dare not venture to express what I have witnessed in my long passage through this troublesome life; but I have lived long enough to say that I believe them [the Church] as a Body to be the most narrow-minded of the human race. . . ."

And as his religious views had undergone neither change nor modification, his political outlook remained unaltered. Although he had ostensibly severed his connection with the political world, still he continued to take an unabated interest in current events. His last appearance of importance in a public capacity is said to have been in the spring of 1835, when he was chairman at a large meeting of the Reform Association, and in that same year we have curious evidence of the political influence with which he was still accredited, in two witty election squibs, here appended:—

A NEW TRAGEDY.

SCENE.—The Statue Gallery in H—lk—m Hall.

The Dictator General of the County of Norfolk is seated in an easy chair reading the Courier Newspaper, and looking mighty sour. The History of the American War is lying beside him.

Enter Messenger.

Dictator.

How now! what news from Norwich?

Messenger.

Alas! dread Sir! the Gunton youth,
And Betty Martin, his adopted friend,
Are beaten into fits—
Stormont and Scarlett reign triumphant there,
While thousands of their friends with loud acclaim
Bid the responsive echo sound their praise.

Dictator.

Disastrous news; but what of Yarmouth? tell—
Doubtless my valued kinsman conquers there?

Messenger.

Ill-fated wretch am I, still to be doomed
To bring sad tidings to my master's ear—
[*Weeps.*

Dictator.

Speak out, nor keep us thus in dire suspense.

Messenger.

Anson and Rumbold, with the earliest dawn,
This morning left the scene of their defeat.
[*Both weep.*

Dictator.

Hast thou no word of comfort to impart,
To soothe the throbbings of this tortured breast——
Heard'st thou not aught from Ipswich?

Messenger.

Press me not, Sir; I've said already more
Than might suffice to bid Destructives quail,
And bring old Cartwright back to earth again.

Dictator.

And is it so indeed?
Does Suffolk's capital in truth return
Two loyal men to guard King William's throne?
Ah cursed loyalty, from earliest youth
I've toil'd to whelm thee in dark falsehoods' mire,
And now thou risest brighter than of yore,
To heap new sorrows on this aged head!
[*Weeps and groans audibly.*

Messenger.

All *must* be told—why do I then conceal
That foul defeat has also been our lot
At Colchester and Harwich—Bury too
Has spurn'd the Radical who claimed her love.

Dictator, (in a rage.)

Enough—begone—tell me no more of this!!

Enter second Messenger.

Dictator.

Thou, like an angel, com'st to calm my woe,
And tell me Lillie is return'd for Lynn.

Messenger.

Would that thy thoughts, Most Mighty Sir,
Like some prophetic vision, told thee truth.

Dictator.

What can'st thou mean?
Has Lynn, the faithful, the devoted Lynn,
Renounced our rule, and joined the rebel throng,
That venture to dispute our sovereign will?

Messenger.

Alas! 'tis even so!
Canning has gain'd a mighty triumph there,
And, writ in pocket, townward has return'd;
Moreover, Sir, as hitherward I sped
To bring these tidings to your noble ear,
A mighty troop came pricking o'er the plain,
With loud huzzah and banners waving high,
Part, as they tell, of Bagge's determined band.
Believe me, Sir, the West will soon be *up*—
The gathering call has echoed thro' the land,
And thousands wait the signal to advance—
Wodehouse and Walpole in the East, no more
Are willing found to compromise their cause;
They bid defiance to the opposing foe,
And smirk and titter at the name of C*ke.

Dictator, in a phrenzy.

Have all my slaves rebelled?
What spirit foul has whisper'd in their ear,
The long forgotten name of liberty!!
I'll crush these villains to the earth again,
I'll shew them how to raise their rebel voice
Against the Mighty Name of H*lk*m's Lord.

*Door opens—in rush Archdeacon Brazennose, The Hon. G. K*pp*l, The Hon. G. A*s*n, Mr. C. E. R*mb*ld, The Boy H*rb*d, followed by Anthony and other menials, all in the deepest mourning, with handkerchiefs to their faces.*

Here—in mercy to the compassionate reader,

The curtain drops.

J. IUNGIUS, PRINTER AND STATIONER, LOWER GOAT LANE, NORWICH.

C-K-'S APOTHEOSIS;

OR,

THE LAST SCENE

OF THE

Norfolk Tragedy

SCENE—H—lk—m H—ll.

The curtain rises and discovers the Body of the late Dictator lying in State. The Earl of Al—em—le, Lord S—ffi—d, The Hon. G. K—pp—l, The Hon. G. A—ns—n, Mr. C. E. R—mb—d, The Hon. E. V. H—rb—d, W. H. W—dh—m, Esq., R. H. G—r—y, Esq., and the rest of the Dramatis personæ, in deep mourning, are arranged on each side of the coffin. J. S. M—sk—t, Esq. is seen in the back-ground. The Venerable Archdeacon Gl—v—r, in the centre, in full pontificals.

Archdeacon. *Hung be the heavens with black!* The great Dictator—the Mighty Dungeness—is no more. [*a general groan.*] Well may you groan my friends. [*another groan, much louder.*] Wodehouse and Walpole, ye murderers of the best of masters—cursed be your names thro' all succeeding ages. [*murmers of indignation, interspersed with an occasional d—n.*] Was it not enough that Norwich, Lynn, and Yarmouth, seditiously and traitorously returned vile Tories to Parliament,—but must East Norfolk too be tempted to rebel and to reject her lawful representatives? This last stroke, my friends, was too much for our aged Patron. Then burst his patriot heart! [*They all exhibit signs of the deepest dejection.*] Of my own particular griefs it would ill become me to speak,—else could I tell of prospects blighted—of beatific visions of mitres and crosiers, dispersed in an instant by the fell blast of Toryism, "while despair in vain sits brooding over the putrid eggs of hope!!" How now, what noise is that?

Enter Anthony, stark mad, without his stays, and fantastically dressed up with orange and white ribbands, marvellously befouled.

Anthony. [*Sings distractedly:—*]

And will he not come in again?
And will he not come in again?
No, no, he's turned out
By the vile Tory rout,
And he'll never come in again!

Archdeacon. Alas! what a sight is here. Poor Anthony! "Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade revenge, it could not move thus." [*Enter two keepers, much out of breath; they remove Anthony.*] My friends, a sudden thought strikes me,—you must all acknowledge the advantages of Union. There should be no enmities amongst Reformers. There are, however, two of us here, who have been too long estranged from each other. What's done can't be undone. Let them forgive and forget.

M—sk—t. [*Rushing forward in a paroxism of enthusiasm.*] You've touched me nearly, Sir. [*to G—r—y.*] Let us swear an eternal friendship.

G—r—y. [*Bursting into tears.*] Agreed.

M—sk—t. My Hanbury!

G—r—y. My Salisbury! [*They faint alternately in each other's arms, and are carried out in streng hysterics.*]

At this juncture soft music is heard. A tri-coloured cloud is seen descending gradually till it alights upon the stage; it then disperses, and discloses to view a magnificent balloon of tri-coloured silk, in the car of which are seated the Ghosts of Philip Egalité, Charles James Fox, Robespierre, Marat, Tom Paine, and other distinguished philanthrophists, several of whom carry their heads loose under their arms. Many Ghosts of persons slain in the American War flit around the balloon. Fox descends from the car, and moving majestically towards the coffin, taps upon the lid in a solemn manner three times. The lid rises, and the figure of the late Dictator suddenly appears, sitting bolt upright in the coffin. Fox offers him his arm, and they proceed together to the car, the Ghosts of the unfortunate victims of the American War crowding round the Dictator with every testimony of affectionate regard. His Highness appears much affected. He ascends the car, politely assisted by Egalité, (who gives his head to Tom Paine to hold) and having embraced the illustrious dead all round, and crowned with the Cap of Liberty by Egalité, he waves his hand with a dignified air to his astonished subjects and mourners. The balloon then slowly ascends, the orchestra playing *Ca ira*, and the Rev. R. F. E—w—n accompanying them, from the stage, upon the violin, and beating time with great energy. The curtain falls just as the balloon disappears.

J. IUNGIUS, PRINTER AND STATIONER, LOWER GOAT LANE, NORWICH.

Six years after his retirement from public life we are told how "the name of 'Mr. Coke of Norfolk' is familiar, we may truly say dear as that of one of the oldest and one of the staunchest of the liberal politicians of this country"; in the consistency of his principles and conduct men still acknowledged the power of an example which was potent in that active world from which he had retired.[1]

Even after it was no longer possible for him to fill the post of chairman, he was ready to attend political meetings, and to give his utmost support to candidates whom he considered to be of the right persuasion. "Lord Leicester," wrote Lady Leicester to Sir William ffolkes during the General Election of 1841, "is as anxious *as ever* to see our country better represented!" He always refused to speak of the "Conservatives," he called them the "Destructives," and distrusted their motives as cordially as he had done those of their predecessors, the Tories of a former epoch, never doubting that intrigue, self-seeking and enmity to liberty, the characteristics of the hated Ministers of George III, were the inheritance of their modern successors—principles which, as he once said, made it "a degradation even to shake hands with them." After the passing of the Reform Bill, his great delight was to reflect that "the Tories could no longer traffic in Places and Pensions." "It is this," he announced, "which makes them so angry—and the more they are angry the more I am pleased!" When his eighty-seventh birthday was celebrated in Norfolk by a dinner during his

[1] Pamphlet, Thomas William Coke, Earl of Leicester, Beaufort House, Strand, *circa* 1838.

absence at Longford, he sent a triumphant message to Sir William ffolkes, "Tell the Tories there is *no hope for them* from the state of my health!" To the last he expressed his satisfaction that throughout the length of his parliamentary career he had never given a vote which had for its object the imposition of a single tax or the shedding of a drop of blood; neither that, looking back over that career, could he recall one vote ever given by him which, if the opportunity were again his, he could wish to dispose differently.

His fear that his sons might develop the detested Tory principles once received a rude shock. In 1836 the famous Dr. Hawtrey, of Eton,[1] attended the Bucks Conservative dinner at Salt Hill, and made a speech in which, suiting his mood to his company, he extolled the spirit of Conservatism which existed at Eton in a manner which was distinctly injudicious.

> "When," he wound up his remarks, "I look upon those who are present at the school of which my friends and myself have charge, I see among them only one spirit of Loyalty and Conservatism . . . and I cannot but think that the existence of those feelings at the present time, not only at Eton, but in other public schools and in both Universities, is a subject of great hope to the Country, as it proves that whatever may be the language uttered in other places, there is a general *attachment* to loyal and Conservative principles, and that the country is sound at the core!"

A report of his speech in full appeared in *The Times*, July 4th, 1836, and Charles Fox at once drew Coke's

[1] Edward Craven Hawtrey, D.D. (1789-1862). In 1814 became under-master, in 1834 head-master, and in 1852 provost of Eton.

attention to it: "I cannot help writing to you to express a hope that you do not *intend your son Tom to be bred up a Conservative*," he wrote sarcastically; and quoting the Doctor's speech he concluded with fervour, "I only hope he may suffer for it in his pocket, and that every true Whig will take his son away from such a *Conservative care!*"

This was more than sufficient for Coke. He wrote off at once to Dr. Hawtrey to demand an explanation. The Doctor wrote back in evident alarm, assuring him—"There is no gentleman in England for whom all parties entertain a higher personal respect than Mr. Coke; and I have therefore thought it a duty thus to disavow an interpretation which I had not thought, till to-day, could be put upon my words." Calling upon friends to bear witness to the misconstruction of his remarks by the Press, he sent Coke a revised copy of the offending speech, underlining and writing in large type all sentences which could minimise the impression thereby conveyed, and emphatically averring that the political views of the boys under his charge invariably were those which they had imbibed in their own homes. Unfortunately for his endeavours, nothing could palliate the statement that a country could be pronounced *sound at the core* through holding the obnoxious tenets of the "Destructives." Coke wrote back coldly to thank him for the explanation of a speech which—

> "as an old Etonian, not indifferent to the interests and Prosperity of the venerable Institution under the fostering care of which I myself was bred, I could not read without deep regret. Without any

wish to control or influence either your opinion or those of other boys committed to your charge, I am sure you will allow me to say that I do and must feel very anxious that your statement as it now stands *altered* [1] may be found correct, and that, as regards my own son, the feelings which he may derive from home may be those and those *only* which will guide him in the future conduct of his life."

But although he risked the Conservatism of Eton, out of respect to the remembrance of old Lady Leicester's prejudice against Universities, he did not contemplate sending his sons to college. And although so many of his great friends had been soldiers, such was his horror of war in the abstract that he never wished them to enter the army. "His admonition to his eldest son, incessantly repeated," stated the local papers, "was that agriculture, planting and building were to be his pursuits." His third son Henry, however, entered the navy during his father's lifetime, and so well was the name of "Coke of Norfolk" known at that date, that by common consent Coke's son was called by the name of "Norfolk" so long as he remained in the service.

On one of those often recurring occasions when Lord Albemarle was called upon to give the health of "Coke of Norfolk," he wound up the speech with which he prefaced his toast by the remark: "Sure I am he is equally entitled with his noble ancestor to say—'He never gave up his body to physic, his heart to cruelty, nor his hand to corruption.'" [2] It is perhaps unnecessary again to emphasise the parallel between certain charac-

[1] The italics are my own.—*Author.*

[2] *Norwich Courier,* February 7th, 1819.

teristics of the Lord Chief Justice and his descendant. Enough has been said to show how, in hatred of oppression and of all infringement of the rights of the people, the same principles actuated each; the great aim of each was to combat the encroachment of the Crown in all undue exercise of the royal prerogative; while, in obstinate integrity of conduct, honesty of speech, and ceaseless energy of purpose for which each in his generation was conspicuous, we have again traced a strong similarity. But the resemblance which is apparent at many a period of their lives is perhaps never more marked than when those lives were drawing to a close, for, in his vigorous old age, the Chief Justice was still fighting the Commons with fiery spirit on behalf of the Petition of Right, while in like manner and at about like age, his descendant, two hundred years later, was struggling again for the rights of the people as involved in the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832. Minor points of resemblance, too, might be quoted, for of both with equal truth it might be said—

> "*. . . he much applauded his own success . . . in his free coming of all his offices; neither begging nor bribing for preferment.*
>
> "*He always declined Circumlocutions and commended Moderation. If an adverse Party crossed him, he would patiently reply: If another punish me, I will not punish myself.*
>
> "*He would never privately retract what he had publicly adjudged.*"

And while of the Chief Justice a chronicler remarked that "*his most laborious works . . . will last, to be admired by his judicious Posterity, to the end of Time*";

of his descendant the Duke of Sussex pronounced, with unconscious similarity of phrase: "*So long as this Mansion shall last, so long as these blooming fields retain their verdure, so long shall his fame continue;—nay, till Time shall be no more.*" For the energy of each in his different sphere and generation, equally accomplished a remarkable work, "*whereby he greatly obliged his own Age and Posterity.*"

But the stern old Chief Justice, though feared and admired by his contemporaries, could boast but little of their love; and one of his descendants, Thomas Coke, the builder of Holkham, who, as we saw, inherited something of his genius and perseverance with other of his less praiseworthy qualities—despite the liberality and the display for which he was applauded, despite actions of exceptional and disinterested generosity—never conquered the cordial dislike of his generation. To their later descendant it was left to win a love from his fellows which both missed, and which was of a quality so unusual that, although it has already found expression in these pages, it is impossible to avoid commenting upon it. No doubt liberal landlords can with little difficulty win the goodwill of their dependents, and lavish hosts readily gain the approbation of those who profit by their hospitality; but the voices of Coke's contemporaries bespeak an affection above the ordinary meed of praise bestowed upon a popular man. Glancing cursorily through the correspondence or the speeches of that date, one cannot fail to be struck with the expressions of devotion used towards him, so extravagant in their

homage that it is difficult to accept them for what they were—the sober utterances of disinterested men.

Mr. Elsden, a gentleman of independent means, speaking at a Norwich meeting in 1830, exclained: "Of Mr. Coke I dare hardly trust myself to speak, *for I adore him in that high degree* that if I had the power to express my thoughts, I should be led away by the intensity of my feelings to say more than befits a public assembly—view him in what light I will, he stands so pre-eminently high."[1] Earlier, Mr. S. Trafford Southwell, writing to Dr. Parr, remarks: "I have such a regard, and love, and respect for Mr. Coke *that it is little short of idolatry*."[2] Other correspondents and public speakers invariably refer to "that great and good man, Mr. Coke," or "that incomparable Patriot," as a man apart from all others who may, without apology, be spoken of in terms which the casual mention of no other man evoked. The comments of Roscoe, of Sir James Smith, of the Duke of Sussex and of many of his friends we have seen: it is unnecessary to multiply instances; but Southwell, seeking for an explanation of the fact, observes:—

> "Honesty is in every man's duty, and in every man's power; yet such is the frailty of our nature that you may see ten thousand wise, or sensible, or agreeable men sooner than one honest man; and if we did not both know Mr. Coke, I should find it very difficult, if not impossible, to point out a man of strict uniform integrity in great and small, in business or pleasure, pursuit or relaxation;—to all these qualities he unites a native dignity," etc.[3]

[1] Speech ata meeting of Freeholders, July 31st, 1830. (Pamphlet in the possession of Sir William ffolkes.)

[2] *Parr's Works*, Vol. VIII, p. 385.

[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 385.

Naturally such utterances (of which it would be easy to multiply instances) bear recognition only when spoken by those who had nothing to gain by a wordy panegyric. Dr. Parr's admiration, it has been conceded, was open to the accusation of not being wholly disinterested; others—in that so many were the recipients of benefits—must share that suspicion; while, as we have seen, even the eccentric tenant, Abbott, recognised this disadvantage, for when extolling his good fortune in having become Mr. Coke's tenant, he concluded his diatribe with the shrewd regret: "Any stranger reading this would say, '*The man who wrote it has a favour to ask!*'" But the construction which Abbott feared might be put upon his homely gratitude cannot apply to the comments of men of independent position who had, personally, neither received benefits in the past nor required them in the future, and who in many instances were expressing their opinions privately to their own friends, in letters which they knew would never meet the eye of the man they discussed. Nor can it apply to those who, bitterly antagonistic to Coke politically, were eager to vilify his every action. Yet the most prejudiced of these, a Tory who published violent letters to Coke upon all the political delinquencies of the latter, possibly struck the keynote of his enemy's power, when he admitted, grudgingly—

> "Everything about you connected with *home* is one strong enchantment. There you are the mighty magician that can call up visions of delight to the wayfaring man. . . . Your festivities have been without pomp and your kindnesses without restraint. You have tempted to your table the great and the learned, the lowly and the good. In your society

the industrious farmer and the useful mechanic have forgot their littleness. . . . At such a board every man has been proud to sit."[1]

Years before, Coke's great friend in the political world, Fox, despite his faults, had won from his contemporaries a passionate devotion which has since become a matter of history, and which made Burke, even when at enmity with him, describe him as "a man made to be loved." And to Coke, devoid of the vices which had marred the career of his great contemporary, —but independent, downright and averse from courting the favour of any man to an extent which often alienated those who would have served him—it had yet been given to command a devotion only less remarkable than that bestowed upon Fox, in that, reviewing his life, one is forced to admit that it was more deserved. In his extreme old age we are told how, "though at last his body was enfeebled and his sight impaired, his freshness of heart remained the same";[2] in brief, that "first gloss of human affection and feeling" which Sir James Smith had recognised, lingered with "Coke of Norfolk" to the end, and in a manner which neither unblemished integrity, ceaseless generosity, nor disinterested labour for humanity could have ensured, gained him that love from his fellows which has been seldom equalled, if ever surpassed, by any private individual.

Yet the man who receives an unusual dole of affec-

[1] *A letter to T. W. Coke, Esqre., M.P., by Clericus.* Printed and sold by Burks and Kinnerbrook, Norwich, and sold by Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, Paternoster Row, London; 1817, p. 53.

[2] *Narrative of the Proceedings regarding the erection of the Leicester Memorial*, p. 81. Bacon and Co., Norwich.

tion is also the man who bestows it; and during those last years of his life Lord Leicester had often again to experience that penalty attached to prolonged days, in the loss of friends who predeceased him. The expectation of that parting had for long past pervaded and saddened the letters received by him. Years before, Martin Rishton had announced: "I shall sleep no more out of Lynn till I sleep with my fathers"; and from far-away New York, in 1835, Richard Caton, complaining of declining health, had observed:[1] "Since I was at Holkham, time has made great inroads on my walks of life, and must soon diminish my occupancy to a few feet of Earth. You, my dear Sir, when it pleases Heaven to call you to a better and happier world, will leave many records of a life well spent. My care exercised in a humbler sphere will leave little to record my existence." Only the old Bishop of Norwich had viewed that approaching separation with a calm which no sorrow could shake. "I am fully persuaded, and the persuasion delights me," he had reiterated to Coke, "that the mutual recognition of those who sincerely loved each other on earth, will enhance their joy in Heaven."

But each year during that last phase of Lord Leicester's life may be said to have been marked by the loss of some one whom he had known and loved. In 1834 died Lord Spencer, so long his fellow-worker in the agricultural world. In 1840 his old friend, Lord William Russell, stayed at Holkham with his valet Courvoisier, and left, in health and spirits, to meet a tragic death at the hands of the latter four days later.

[1] He survived till 1845.

That same year died Lord Holland, and Lord John Russell, writing to Lady Anne, remarks how: "This sudden death of Lord Holland, so good and kind a friend . . . will never be replaced to me and many more;—I am sure Lord Leicester will have felt the loss of this image of Mr. Fox." The following year, Chantrey, transformed and blighted by the mental affliction which darkened his later years, yet still in possession of his splendid genius, stayed at Holkham in order to see the statue which he had made of Bishop Bathurst placed in Norwich Cathedral, from Holkham wrote the last letter which he ever penned, and died on November 25th, the day after his return to London. The Duke of Sussex, too, warm-hearted, outspoken, and loyal in friendship as of yore, was fast sinking into a state of health which could have but one termination; —one by one, too numerous to mention, the friends of "Coke of Norfolk" were advancing towards the Land of Shadows; and sometimes as he looked round the gallery at Holkham, where so often in the past those friends had assembled in the fullness of health and vigour—each strong with an individuality which it seemed incredible that death could ever dissipate—the silence must have seemed repeopled to him with the voices that were no more.

But one other parting lay before him, from which he shrank, it is said, more than all the rest. "In his neighbourhood," we have been told, "he was *idolized*. . . . He had one source of pride—he gloried in his tenantry, and they, in return, loved, revered and looked up to him as a father. The darling object of his life was to render them independent—the subject

he derived most pleasure from talking upon was their intelligence, their skill in agriculture, *their confidence in him*";[1] and to this tenantry, whose welfare he had promoted, and whose affection he had won, he was about to bid farewell.

In 1841 he attended the supper after the Holkham audit for the last time. He had already taken an active part in the business of a long, tiring day, and every argument was used to overrule his decision to be present at the conclusion of the supper in the evening. But his determination was not to be shaken. In reply to all remonstrances he said that he was an old man whose life could not be of very long duration, and that he wanted to ensure seeing his farmers again.

Between nine and ten in the evening, therefore, he made his way to the audit room. Lord Coke had sprained his ankle on the ice and could not be present, so two of his brothers, with Lord Crewe and Lord Rosebery, were helping to superintend. The farmers were seated round the long table smoking and drinking; no one was expecting Lord Leicester's arrival, when the door opened and he came in so quietly that scarcely any of his guests were aware of his presence, till, suddenly, they saw him standing at the head of the table where he used to preside. With a shout of welcome they all rose to their feet. For a few moments the room rang with cheers while they pressed forward to shake his hands; then, filling their glasses, they toasted him, and all broke into a chorus of the "Fine Old English Gentleman," which they sang again and again, many with the tears running down their cheeks.

[1] See *ante*, footnote, Vol. I, p. 293.

It was a curious sight to see the usually phlegmatic men completely transformed; and a description of the scene was afterwards written by a farmer who was present[1] and who said that he had been a tenant on the Holkham estate for thirty years, like his father before him, but not for the worth of his lease would he have missed being present on that memorable evening.

As the cheering subsided, the old Earl spoke to them; and although his step was feeble and his strength visibly diminished, his voice was strong, his memory clear, his views determined and concise as ever; he never hesitated for a word, but, as he warmed to his subject, he spoke with all his old enthusiasm, till, it was said, that never had he made a better speech. He told them that, standing on the verge of eternity, he had come to see them for what might be the last time. He wanted to thank them for all the help they had given him in furthering his schemes, for the skill, talent and industry with which they had improved his estate. He urged upon them the value of enterprise and perseverance, and the importance for both landlord and tenant of what, ever since the age of twenty-two, he had unceasingly advocated—long leases at fair rents; and he told them that he had come to offer them all a renewal of their leases for twenty-one years. Then, according to his invariable custom, he spoke to the men individually, and at last, individually, bade them farewell. One last toast was given, the Holkham motto of "Live and Let Live," before he left them; and then it was said that some of the men broke down and sobbed.

[1] *Norwich Mercury*, January 15th, 1841. Account of Holkham Audit, January 12th, 1841.

At the next audit he was not allowed to attend, although he was most anxious to do so; but he insisted upon standing with his little granddaughter, Anna Maria Stanhope, where he could hear the cheers when his name was toasted. In the June following he left Norfolk for Longford, driving away from Holkham, for the last time, on just such a sunny summer's day as that on which, nearly seventy years before, he had looked out so eagerly for the first sight of his future home.

At Longford a great event was impending. Preparations were being made to open two bridges, which, at a cost of £800, he had built over a mill stream which ran through the village. The event was fixed to take place on the Thursday following his arrival, which was Lady Leicester's birthday; and it had been specially arranged that his carriage was to be the first to drive over the new route. On the eventful day people from the surrounding neighbourhood began arriving at Longford at an early hour, and at the appointed time a considerable crowd were awaiting Lord Leicester's arrival. Directly his carriage came into sight a group of Longford tenants ran forward, and stopping it, took out the horses, and drew it through the cheering crowd down the road and over the bridges. A long procession followed, vehicles, riders and people on foot, while the children threw bouquets into the carriage or strewed flowers before it. Afterwards, about two hundred tenants' children had tea at the hall, and in the evening amateur theatricals were given, while, in the village, a dinner and dance took place.

The next morning Lord Leicester rose, apparently

well and unharmed by the excitement of the day before. His first act was to order the carriage that he might drive down to one of the bridges, for, on the previous day, he had noticed some white space in the coping, and thinking it was some defect in the masonry, true to his usual habit he determined to inspect it personally and promptly. Arrived at the spot, he got out of the carriage and thoroughly satisfied himself that the work was sound. In the afternoon he drove out again; but in the early hours of Saturday morning the news sped through the village that he had been taken ill. At eighty-eight years of age any illness is serious, and from the first he accepted the fact that the end of life was imminent. At intervals he had to endure terrible paroxysms of pain, but his mind was clear to the last, and as he lay waiting for death, his thoughts were with the work to which he had devoted his existence. Dr. Fox, who attended him, relates: "The mental condition was most satisfactory, being quite rational and collected throughout the whole illness; and a more patient and benevolent being I never attended." Writing on July 1st to Lady Caroline Garnier, he gave a detailed account of those last days, and of the scene which closed them :—

> "As I feel that everything connected with the history of so great and good a man as Lord Leicester must be deeply interesting to every one who wishes well of mankind, and especially to his own family, I have thought a brief sketch of that which passed during the four days and nights which I spent at Longford whilst attending upon his Lordship in the illness which ended in his death cannot be altogether unacceptable.

"I visited Lord Leicester on Sunday morning last. As soon as I had ascertained the symptoms, I was well persuaded his attack would, in all probability, prove fatal . . . and although the case terminated fatally, still we had the inexpressible gratification of witnessing the salutary effects produced by the remedies in the removal of the most torturing agonies and establishing perfect tranquillity; and to such an extent that, for the last twelve hours of Lord Leicester's life, he was entirely free from pain; and most consolatory it was to see the peaceful manner in which he expired.

"When I first arrived, he begged I would on no account leave him. I promised to comply with his request. His universal patience and resignation was most striking; always thankful to God and those around him for any relief he experienced, always submitting at once to everything that was done to him, or required from him. In the evening of Sunday, after appearing incapable of talking during the day, he had a short return of energy; he then talked to me cheerfully; spoke of Dr. Chambers in the highest terms, and of his being a *good Whig*. He then asked what kind of day it had been. I told him it had not been quite so hot, and that there had been showers; he said *what excellent weather it was for the farmers*, and appeared much pleased that they had such a fine season.

"He inquired whether I had ever heard of Lady Leicester's courage in requesting Sir Henry Halford not to continue his attendance upon him when severely ill some time since? I replied I had not. He said her conduct then was such no other woman in England could have shown. . . .

"Then he spoke of her Ladyship's excellence. How happy she had made his life; how attentive she was to all; how she visited the poor and delighted in making all happy, and he spoke in the tenderest manner of his affection for her, and how fortunate he had been in having married her, calling her an 'Angel of a woman.' He then related how Lady

Spencer had never congratulated him on his marriage until years afterwards, when she wrote to him and said with what anxiety she had looked upon it when it took place, but that having had time to make her observations, she was satisfied that no one of her sex possessed judgment and excellence of disposition qualified to make him happy in a manner equal to Lady Leicester, and that she considered him a most fortunate and happy man; and in a most exulting way he said, '*And I have got that letter now!*' I remarked, such a letter was worth keeping. He replied, holding it up in his hands, '*Yes, and I shall keep it.*' Nothing appeared so delightful to him as to talk of his affection for his wife and children.

"At last he said, 'Well, perhaps I have talked too much,' and he ceased; after which his powers never rallied again sufficiently to permit him to converse at any length. He frequently expressed how thankful he was to be relieved from pain. Never was he for one moment peevish or irritable. His countenance always beamed with benevolence, which even continued after death. Now and then in his sleep he talked about his farms. Whenever Mr. Garnier prayed with him, or spoke to him upon religious matters, he paid great attention, and always appeared to be ready to talk upon those subjects. The scene throughout was most affecting, and deeply interesting. The kindness and anxiety of all to do all they could for him, showed how he had been valued and loved, and certainly I never spent four days which called forth so much sympathy and strong emotion as those which I spent at Longford."

Early on Thursday, June 30th, just a week after he had been drawn in triumph over the bridges which were his last gift to his tenants, the tolling of the church bell about noon told the inhabitants of the village that Lord Leicester was no more.

Many there were, on receipt of that news, who, in

the words of Harriet Martineau, mourned "the death of old Lord Leicester, who had been, under the name of Mr. Coke, my early ideal of the patriot gentleman of England."[1]

"It never before happened to me to receive a letter from you with pain," wrote the Duke of Bedford to Lady Anne on that sad June 30th. "I was not at all prepared for the melancholy intelligence; it has come upon me like a shock. . . . I hope there will be a good and well-considered Memoir of Lord Leicester. He was a very remarkable man, and his long and useful life is quite without a parallel." Four days later, he wrote again to Mr. T. Keppel:—

> "Pray thank your sister for her most kind attention at such a moment. . . . I have indeed lost a kind and dear friend, and one whose kindness and friendship I can never forget. They were as constant as they were gratifying to both of us, and the Duchess has felt his loss as much as I have. . . . We returned yesterday when I got your letter. I intended to have gone to the Fox Club dinner, but had not spirit to join the Society of which he had long been distinguished as a member. . . . Lord Leicester was a very remarkable man, and I hope there will be some good Memoir of his valuable, useful and happy life."

For two days the body lay in state at Longford in a coffin covered with crimson velvet and bearing the inscription:

"Thomas William Coke
Earl of Leicester
Died June 30th 1842.
Aged 88."

[1] *Autobiography of Harriet Martineau* (1817), Vol. II, p. 184.

On July 7th the funeral set out on the first stage of its journey to Tittleshall. A special request had been sent to the Mayor of Derby that it might be allowed to pass through that town in a private manner, so, beyond the fact that the shops were closed and the bells kept tolling, no public demonstration took place. A procession of carriages and a large number of the Longford tenantry on horseback accompanied it to the further side of Derby, where they turned back, and the funeral passed on its way to Bingham, which was reached by eight o'clock that evening.

There the body again lay in state, and also at the completion of the second day's journey. Upon the third day it approached Norfolk, and then crowds began to line the roads along which it travelled, "amid deep silence, only interrupted by the tramp of the horsemen, the grating of the carriage wheels, and the heavy tolling of the bells in the villages through which it passed." But when it reached Lynn the whole town was a city of mourning; black flags flew from the turret of the gate by which it entered, from all the public buildings, from all the ships in the harbour; the shops were closed, and many of the poorest inhabitants were dressed in some sign of mourning. At the Crown Hotel, where the body lay that night, over fifteen hundred people passed through the room to see it, while, owing to the lateness of the hour, over a thousand more were turned away. On Sunday morning the procession again went on its way through streets lined with people waiting to see it pass. It reached Swaffham at about ten o'clock, and from that hour till eleven o'clock the following morning the body lay in

the same room where forty-two years before Mrs. Coke's body had rested upon the same journey.

On Monday, July 11th, the last stage was accomplished, and then occurred a scene perhaps the most extraordinary which Norfolk had ever witnessed. Although every effort had been made to keep the funeral private in character, such numbers of people were determined to join it that this became impracticable. Soon after daybreak, from all parts of the country, riding, driving and walking, people began to arrive, all anxious to pay this last tribute to the man to whom they owed so much. At eleven o'clock, when the procession started, it was in itself an extraordinary sight. First rode the steward, leading one hundred and fifty Holkham tenants on horseback. Then followed carriages containing the pall-bearers, clergy and others. These were followed, in their turn, by a solitary carriage in which sat the dead man's valet holding the coronet upon a velvet cushion. Then came the hearse, drawn by six horses, and bearing the coffin covered by a crimson pall; and then a long train of mourning coaches, each drawn by four horses, after which was led the dead man's own carriage and four, with closed shutters. Following this came several hundreds of private carriages bearing his personal friends; then two hundred gentlemen on horseback, riding two abreast; and, finally, a long train of miscellaneous vehicles belonging to neighbours, tenants and yeomen. The procession was two miles long when it started, but at every cross-road along the route numbers were waiting to join it. At Lexham alone one hundred and sixty gentlemen on horseback had assembled to follow it;

while as it approached Tittleshall many belonging to the other side of the county, and who had been unable to travel further, came to swell the train, until it was impossible to compute its length, save that, when the hearse finally drew up at the door of the church, the line of carriages alone reached to Litcham, two and a half miles off.

But it was the numbers unable to join in the actual procession, but yet determined to see it pass, who presented the most remarkable spectacle. In the neighbourhood of Swaffham, it is said, fifteen thousand people were assembled. Many of these had arrived overnight and had taken their position during the late hours of Sunday. Along either side of the road which the funeral was to traverse were vehicles which had been brought there the day previously, and in which, after the horses had been removed, their owners had passed the night. The fields beyond were alive with people, many of whom had camped out on mattresses or cloaks amongst the hay. Farm carts and wagons were drawn up in every available space packed with occupants; even across the hedges cloths were flung in order that people might clamber up on to them. For miles the country was one moving mass of people, through whose midst the funeral at times wound its way with difficulty, and the grief on whose faces showed that they were not spectators merely, but mourners for the friend they had lost.

In this manner, along the same route where, two hundred years before, the funeral of the Lord Chief Justice had passed to its destination in the quiet little church of Tittleshall, the long procession wended.

And meanwhile the day was gloriously fine, and to many the thought was full of a special sadness that it was the time of year when the Holkham Sheep-shearing had usually taken place, and when through the long sunny days the dead man, then in his splendid health and vigour, had headed the long train of friends who rode about his lands, and offered his welcome and his hospitality with an unstinting hand.

> "In the cathedral of St. Paul, on a plain pillar, these few words record the genius of Wren: *Si monumentum requiris, circumspice.*[1] In the same manner it may briefly be said to the inquiring traveller who visits Norfolk and canvasses the merits of Mr. Coke: 'View the Garden of Norfolk, his fairest eulogy is written in the page of Nature.'"[2]

And so, midst the evidences of his life-work, past fields of ripening corn and luxuriant pasture, through the country which he had enriched and transformed, and through the people who loved and mourned him, Coke of Norfolk was borne to his last home.

[1] "If you seek a monument, look around you."
[2] *Parr's Works*, ed. by J. Johnstone, Vol. VIII, p. 222.

EPILOGUE

ONE last event remains to be recorded. Scarcely had the news of Lord Leicester's death spread through the county than, so early as July 7th, a suggestion was set on foot that a public monument should be raised to his memory. A committee was speedily formed, and the Duke of Sussex was one of the first applied to "upon a subject most dear to the hearts of the yeomanry and tenantry of the county of Norfolk;—since," as the letter explains with a simplicity which is eloquent, "your Royal Highness is aware that it has pleased God to take from us that great and good man, Thomas William Coke, late Earl of Leicester, to whom we, as a body, feel so deeply indebted that we look upon our loss as irreparable, and indeed, indeed it is so."

The Duke wrote back with his accustomed heartiness, advising the method of proceeding which seemed to him needful for the success of the object in view, and stating that he should not fail

> "to contribute his mite,[1] as a token of love, esteem, admiration and respect for one of the most honest, upright, useful and important members of the human race; whose name will grace the page of

[1] He, however, died before he had discharged his subscription of £25, and it was never paid.

British History during the last two centuries—which name I am proud to engrave upon my heart as one of my best friends, while, as a good man, I consider him to be one of the noblest works of God."[1]

It was at first proposed that, since the benefits derived from the labours of the deceased man had been international, so also should the subscriptions for his monument "be extended to every nation upon earth."[2] But the sums contributed by the yeomanry of Norfolk[3] and those who had been his friends, as well as by many who had been his political opponents, rendered this unnecessary, and it was soon found possible to erect a colossal monument without inviting subscriptions throughout a larger area.

Much discussion then ensued respecting the form of the proposed monument; and, finally, whether it should be raised upon a site in Holkham Park or upon Castle Hill in Norwich, a strong argument in favour of the latter being that, since Coke had secured this hill from the Government for the county of Norfolk, no more appropriate site for his memorial could exist.

The former position, however, was decided upon by a majority of forty-one; and August 12th, 1845, was next fixed as the day upon which the foundation-stone was to be laid by Lord Colborne. Unfortunately, for some time previous to that date, a storm raged along the coast, and upon the morning of the 12th the rain

[1] *Narrative of the proceedings regarding the erection of the Leicester Memorial*, pub. Bacon and Co., *Mercury* Office, Norwich.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 5.

[3] Some of the farmers on the Holkham estate contributed £50 apiece. One of the contributors of this sum was Henry Abbott. A statue of Coke was also erected by local farmers over the Corn Exchange, East Dereham, in 1856.

descended in torrents; but undeterred by the hopeless aspect of the weather, people began assembling from an early hour, till it was estimated that at least ten thousand had entered Holkham Park. At Longlands Farm, two miles distant, from before ten o'clock the procession was forming.

"At about one o'clock," we are told, "the sky began to clear up, and the rain to cease, but long before that hour the whole country round seemed to have been in motion, and had all the horses carried a branch, and all the carriages and vehicles on the road been ornamented with boughs of trees, the great dramatist's idea of a moving grove would have been surpassed by the simultaneous march of half the woods in the county, into a park quite wide enough for their reception.

"The Committee had invited all the subscribers to the monument who could make it convenient to attend, to meet them at Longlands, in the forenoon, entering at the triumphal arch, and thence to proceed in procession through the park. Accordingly, a vast number of the yeomanry of West Norfolk, on horseback, and of ladies and gentlemen in carriages, assembled at the place of rendezvous . . . but not before an immense concourse of people had collected, thousands on foot, and a large number of vehicles of every description. It was long before the procession could be arranged in any sort of order, and when it began to move it formed gradually into a line more than two miles in length . . . a countless mass of human beings marching in sedate order, as if engaged in an act of noble, but solemn duty . . . which, as it moved forwards, had a most imposing effect."[1]

In short, the procession promised to rival that of the memorable funeral train in length, and while one

[1] Holkham MSS., from an account preserved in a scrap-book by the Hon. the Rev. T. Keppel.

part of it appeared within sight of the waiting crowd in Holkham Park, the other end of it had not yet left Longlands. First walked the masons and labourers who were to build the monument, dressed in white with leather aprons and red caps; then followed several companies of tenants, riding three abreast; then the yeomanry and workmen belonging to every branch of local industry; finally, a long train of miscellaneous attendants, the members of the committee, clergy, stewards, Norwich citizens, etc. etc.; and friends from far and near. The procession was gay with banners, bearing for device the time-honoured toasts of the Holkham Sheep-shearings; with others, considered to be more specially commemorative of the man who was gone. First was borne a banner of orange-coloured silk, on which were the Leicester arms, and the motto *Prudens qui patiens*. Among those following were the inscriptions:—

The Respectability of the Crown, the Durability of the Constitution, and the Prosperity of the People.

Coke, the Farmers' Friend.

He lived an example of what might be accomplished by liberality and perseverance. Go and do likewise.

In the virtues of the past we read the hopes of the future.

Not for himself, but for others.

His memory survives.

Coke the Farmers' Benefactor.

Prosperity to the House of Holkham.

A good understanding between landlord and tenant.

Long leases to good tenants.

Live and let live.

Success to agriculture.

Prosperity to those who wish it to others.

John, Sixth Duke of Bedford *Coke of Norfolk, Earl of Leicester*

BAS-RELIEF—IRRIGATION—FROM THE MONUMENT IN HOLKHAM PARK

The Husbandry of Norfolk.
A fine fleece and a fat carcase.
Liberal landlords and grateful tenants.
Breeding in all its branches.
Agriculture, Manufacture, and Commerce.
Speed the plough.
Peace to the nation, and prosperity to the people.
The Plough, and a good use of it.
Peace to the nation, and plenty to the poor.

"Slowly," we are told, "but orderly and majestically in its great magnitude, moved along this mighty multitude," to where an amphitheatre of covered seats had been erected opposite the great stone which hung poised in the air. Then followed many speeches,—speeches which drew a sharp contrast between the surrounding country as it showed that day, and the barren land which some of the older of those present could still remember it,—special allusion being made to the "abundant crops of wheat and barley" then waving over thirty or forty miles of what, fifty years before, had been a dreary track of sand between Holkham and Lynn.

But some of the speeches more closely recalled the friend whose memory the great crowd wished to commemorate, and the effect of these, we are told, "was marked by that deep silence which is one of the peculiar characteristics of our countrymen when their impressions are the strongest and their affections the most powerfully moved; while the eyes of many were dimmed."

"We do rejoice," concluded the last speaker, "to do honour to the memory of this great and good man. In the words of the resolution passed at the

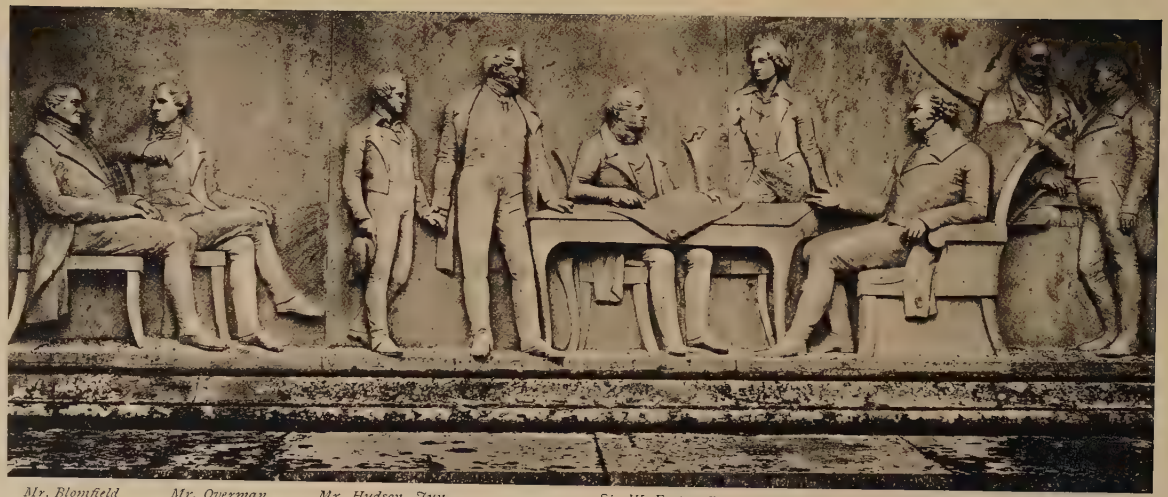
meeting respecting this testimonial: 'For friendship so sincere and disinterested, for services so great, and for benefits so lasting and extensive,' we are anxious to erect this monument to his memory. Long may it stand a memento of his worth, and a token of our gratitude."

And thus, amid profound silence, the great stone was lowered eight feet below the earth into the cavity awaiting it.

The design of the monument which had then been accepted and was afterwards ably carried out, is a pedestal 44 feet square on which stands a fluted column 125 feet in height, surmounted by a wheat sheaf. The four corners of the pedestal show the means by which the late Earl had increased cultivation and production. At the first corner stands a life-sized Devon ox with the inscription under it: "Breeding in all its branches"; at the second corner stand Southdown sheep with the inscription: "Small in size but great in value"; at the third corner is a drill with the inscription: "The improvement of Agriculture"; at the fourth a plough surmounts the well-known Holkham maxim: "Live and Let Live." On the three sides of the pedestal are bas-reliefs, one of which represents the Earl giving a lease to a tenant (and in which may be distinguished, among other celebrities in the agricultural annals of Holkham, the forms of Mr. Overman and Mr. Blakie); the second illustrates sheep-shearing at Holkham; the third denotes irrigation.

It was not, however, till 1850 that this monument was finished, and then a great number of trees, which had impeded the view, having been cleared away, it stood out

The Present Earl of Leicester



Mr. Blomfield *Mr. Overman* *Mr. Hudson, Jun.* *Mr. Hudson, Sen.* *Sir W. Foster, Bt.* *Coke of Norfolk, Earl of Leicester* *Mr. Blaikie*

BAS-RELIEF—GRANTING A LEASE. FROM THE MONUMENT IN HOLKHAM PARK.

boldly in fine isolation on the brow of the hill, while visible beyond, on both sides, was the sea—"those waters"—as the printed narrative points out—"over which were floating vessels whose timber the dead man had planted, and bearing the produce of that soil which, once a desert, was now a rich domain."

Thus, to-day, standing in the Saloon at Holkham, and looking out through the portico, then opposite, across the hall to where, right and left, stretches the vista which cuts the park, one sees outlined against the horizon, on the one hand the Obelisk, self-erected by Thomas Coke to perpetuate the beginning of his great work, and, on the other hand, the tall column raised by a later generation to perpetuate the life-work of his successor.

And perhaps something significant may be found in the fact that a nearer inspection reveals how the former remains barren of inscription, while on the latter may be read the dedication to the "Father, Friend, and Landlord," approved by the hearts of those who erected it, and which was destined by them to record the life-story of Coke of Norfolk.

This Column in memory of
Thomas William Coke, Earl of Leicester,
for more than Half a Century
the faithful Representative of this County
in the House of Commons,
Erected by Subscription,
Originating with the Yeomanry, and supported by the
Noblemen and Gentlemen of all Parties,
Records a life devoted to the welfare of his Friends,
Neighbours and Tenants.
Of such a Man

Contemporaries need no Memorial: his deeds
were before them: his praises in their Hearts;
But it imports Posterity to know that he pre-eminently
combined Public Services with Public Worth,
Affording an illustrious example of Birth and Station
actuated by Duty and inspired by Benevolence.
Integrity and Independence marked his Political Career;
Love, Honour and Regret
attend the Father, Friend and Landlord.
The Arts lament in him a liberal and fostering Patron;
and Agriculture, to which
From early Manhood to the close of his Life he dedicated
Time, Energy, Science and Wealth,
Crowning his Cenotaph with her Emblems,
Cherishes the Precedent and commends the Practice
of her great Promoter and Benefactor.

THE END

MONUMENT TO T. W. COKE, EARL OF LEICESTER, ERECTED BY PUBLIC SUBSCRIPTION IN HOLKHAM PARK. SHOWING THE BAS-RELIEF SHEEP-SHEARING.

APPENDIX A

I HAVE given the account of Coke carrying the recognition of American independence, and of his taking up the Address to George III, precisely as I have found it related by Mr. T. Keppel, and confirmed by other of his contemporaries, despite the fact that Hansard and other parliamentary records give no further mention of it than that apparently conveyed by Sir Joseph Mawbey's speech on March 6th, 1782. In view of all the private evidence in my possession that the facts were as I have related, I should not have been justified in omitting the account of the incident. I can but state the case as it stands, and the reader must draw what conclusion he pleases.

Discarding all evidence which might possibly be legendary, and also the fact, which I have carefully proved, that the incident was all but universally known to a former generation in Norfolk, we have the following evidence in favour of its having taken place as related :—

1. The detailed account of what occurred, written down by the Hon. the Rev. Thomas Keppel, Coke's brother-in-law, and preserved in a notebook now in the possession of his son, the Rev. George Keppel, of Cringleford Hall, Norwich. (Quoted Vol. I, pp. 207–9.)

2. The evidence of the late Lady Elizabeth Spencer-Stanhope, Coke's own daughter, who attested that her father

had related the above facts to her ; that they were universally accepted as correct during his lifetime, and this, above all, by Lord Surrey and others who had been present in the House on the occasion referred to.

3. Coke's own speech (quoted Vol. I, p. 210), in which he personally confirmed the above statements, in public and before a large audience at the Sheep-shearing in 1821, at a date when, even overlooking the fact that Coke was a man utterly unlikely to assume credit for what he had not done, such an assertion, if erroneous, could have been readily disproved by his hearers.

4. That the speech containing Coke's statements of the incident was recorded, published and widely circulated by R. N. Bacon, editor of the *Norwich Mercury*, a man of literary attainments, who was specially conversant with the history of his own times, and unlikely to give publicity to an obvious absurdity.

5. That when Coke retired from public life, a dinner was given to him by the county, at which five hundred people were present, in whose presence the Duke of Sussex, at great length, recapitulated the chief events of Coke's public career, and laid special stress upon the fact that, upon entering Parliament, "Mr. Coke found the American war raging ; he was very young, but, young as he was, he had the courage to take his stand against the war," and later was "*the means of putting an end to that unnatural strife between men and not only between men, but between fellow subjects, etc.*"

(See "*A narrative of the proceedings connected with the dinner to T. W. Coke, Esquire, upon his retirement from the Representation of the County,*" *printed and sold by J. Dawson, Norwich, 1833, and dedicated by permission to H.R.H. the Duke of Sussex.*)

6. That the incident is referred to by Coke's correspondents. See, for instance, the letter (quoted Vol. II, pp. 381–2)

after Coke's denunciation of George III at Lynn, in which, on October 21st, 1830, H. B. Fearon writes :—

> "There are two points which, in your situation, I should feel honoured by having noticed on my tomb : *the one is the carrying to George III the motion to recognise American Independence*, and the other the declaration before quoted."

7. That it was mentioned in other correspondence, not addressed to Coke. Creevey, for instance, in an unpublished letter lent to me by Mrs. Blackett Ord, again states the fact, although he quotes the numbers inaccurately. "Our Monarch" [Coke], he writes from Holkham, ". . . was in the first division against the American War, which was fifteen, *and he moved the recognition of American Independence* which was carried by *one*—277 to 276."

8. Finally, that it was universally recognised and stated by Coke's American correspondents and visitors that he had been a special benefactor to the United States, and that they had peculiar cause for gratitude to him, and this to an extent which cannot be accounted for by the comparatively unimportant circumstance of his being one of many Englishmen who were opposed to the war and desirous to promote peace. *Vide* Stephenson's speech (quoted Vol. I, p. 319) on arriving in England as Minister for the United States of America, and the American correspondence quoted throughout this book.

It must be left, therefore, for the reader to decide whether Coke and his contemporaries were uttering a lie—a lie the absurdity of which appears incredible, since at the date when it was uttered it could have been readily exposed by Coke's opponents, and a lie, moreover, which appears to have deceived the whole of the United States; or whether the explanation is to be found in the laxity with which the records of Hansard, etc., were kept at that period.

In view of this latter conclusion, does it not hint at more

than mere coincidence that Sir Joseph Mawbey should complain that all mention of an important address to His Majesty respecting America had been suppressed, and Lord Surrey mention how, when that particular address was taken up by the House, General Benedict Arnold was standing close to the King's right hand—both statements which tally with Coke's account (given Vol. I, p. 210) of the fact which "*may not be known*," and of his own experience when taking up that important but suppressed address to George III?

APPENDIX B

WITH reference to the threat of Coke, related Vol. II, p. 47, that, despite his previous unflinching loyalty to Fox, he would yet sever all connection with that Minister and his party, another curious account has recently come to light. In *The Agricultural Magazine, or the Farmer's Monthly Journal of Husbandry and Rural Affairs*, for 1811, we are told—

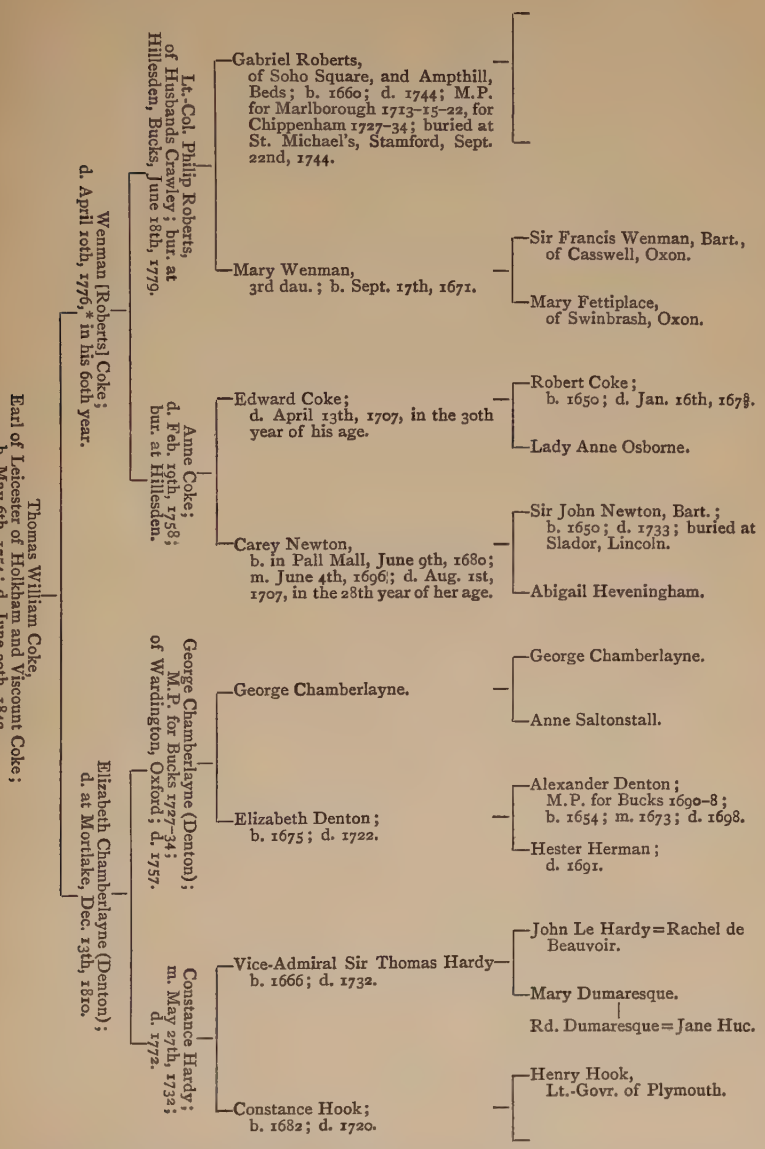
> "Although Mr. Coke supported the late Fox and Grenville administration, yet no sooner did they attempt to impose a tax on home-brewed small beer, and thus introduce an exciseman to every cottage, house and mansion in the kingdom, than Mr. Coke declared that he would withdraw his support; and we are chiefly indebted to this threat, coupled with his open parliamentary opposition to this measure, for the fortunate exemption we still enjoy" (pp. 135, 136).

Whether this was or was not one cause of Coke's suggested severance from Fox it is impossible now to say; but there is little doubt that it was the popularly received explanation of that well-known threat.

THE DESCENDANTS OF THOMAS WILLIAM COKE FIRST EARL OF LEICESTER OF HOLKHAM 1837-1842

COMPILED BY
REGINALD M. GLENCROSS, M.A., LL.B.
BARRISTER-AT-LAW

PEDIGREE SHOWING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE FAMILIES OF COKE AND ROBERTS


Lt.-Col. Philip Roberts, of Husbands Crawley; bur. at Hillesden, Bucks, June 18th, 1779.
Gabriel Roberts, of Soho Square, and Ampthill, Beds; b. 1660; d. 1744; M.P. for Marlborough 1713–15–22, for Chippenham 1727–34; buried at St. Michael's, Stamford, Sept. 22nd, 1744.
Mary Wenman, 3rd dau.; b. Sept. 17th, 1671.
Sir Francis Wenman, Bart., of Casswell, Oxon.
Mary Fettiplace, of Swinbrash, Oxon.
Anne Coke; d. Feb. 19th, 1758; bur. at Hillesden.
Edward Coke; d. April 13th, 1707, in the 30th year of his age.
Robert Coke; b. 1650; d. Jan. 16th, 1678.
Lady Anne Osborne.
Carey Newton, b. in Pall Mall, June 9th, 1680; m. June 4th, 1696; d. Aug. 1st, 1707, in the 28th year of her age.
Sir John Newton, Bart.; b. 1650; d. 1733; buried at Slador, Lincoln.
Abigail Heveningham.
Wenman [Roberts] Coke; d. April 10th, 1776,* in his 60th year.
George Chamberlayne (Denton); M.P. for Bucks 1727–34; of Wardington, Oxford; d. 1757.
George Chamberlayne.
George Chamberlayne.
Anne Saltonstall.
Elizabeth Denton; b. 1675; d. 1722.
Alexander Denton; M.P. for Bucks 1690–8; b. 1654; m. 1673; d. 1698.
Hester Herman; d. 1691.
Elizabeth Chamberlayne (Denton); d. at Mortlake, Dec. 13th, 1810.
Constance Hardy; m. May 27th, 1733; d. 1772.
Vice-Admiral Sir Thomas Hardy b. 1666; d. 1732.
John Le Hardy=Rachel de Beauvoir.
Mary Dumaresque.
Rd. Dumaresque=Jane Huc.
Constance Hook; b. 1682; d. 1720.
Henry Hook, Lt.-Govr. of Plymouth.
Thomas William Coke, Earl of Leicester of Holkham and Viscount Coke; b. May 6th, 1754; d. June 30th, 1842.

* The date is erroneously given in the *Annual Register* as April 11th. The dates given here are copied from those on the coffin plates.

PEDIGREE OF THOMAS WILLIA

SHOWING DESCENT FROM SIR EDWARD COKE, LO

Sir Edward Coke, Lord Chief Justice of the Common Bench. = Bridget, dau. and one of the co-heirs of John Paston.

John Coke, 4th son of the Lord Chief Justice. = Meriel, dau. and heiress of Anthony Wheatley, of Hill Hall, Norfolk.

John, youngest son, succeeded to Holkham, but died unmarried, and Holkham passed to Robert, of Thorington.

Henry, of Thorington, Suffolk, 5th son of the Lord Chief Justice. = 1620 Margaret, dau. and h. of Richard Lovelace, of Kingsdown, Kent.

Richard, of Thorington, b. 1623. = 1647 Maria, dau. of Sir John Rouse, of Henham.

Robert, of Thorington and Holkham. = 1674 Lady Anne Osborne, dau. of Thomas, Duke of Leeds.

Edward, of Holkham = 1696 Car da

Sir Thomas Coke, K.B., Baron Lovel of Minster Lovel, Viscount Coke, and Earl of Leicester. (*Under the terms of his will Thomas William Coke eventually inherited Holkham.*) = 1718 Lady Mary Tufton, afterwards Baroness Clifford, dau. of the Earl of Thanet.

Carey, m. Sir Marmaduke Wyvill. *d.s.p.*

Anne, m. Colonel Philip Roberts, of Husbands Crawley.

Edwar d. un

Edward, Viscount Coke, *d.s.p.* = Lady Mary Campbell, dau. of John, Duke of Argyll.

(1st wife) Elizabeth Theobald, d. Jan. 17th, 1774; her only son Edward was born July 8th, and died July 9th, 1743. =

Wenman Assumed the n in 1750 on succe ford at the deat Robert Coke; Act of Parliame April 10t

(1st wife) 1775 Jane, dau. of James Lenox Dutton (formerly Naper), of Sherborne, Gloucestershire, and sister to James, 1st Lord Sherborne; d. June 2nd, 1800. = 1822 Thomas William of Longford and Holkham; cr. in 1837 Earl of Leicester of Holkham and Viscount Coke. = (2nd wife) Lady Anne Amelia Keppel, dau. of William Charles, 4th Earl of Albemarle.

Edward = Grace, dau. of William Colhoun, of Wrotham, Co. Norfolk.

Thomas William Coke, heir-presumptive to Holkham until 1822.

Edward

Jane Elizabeth, b. Dec. 22nd, 1777.

Anne Margaret, b. Jan. 25th, 1779.

Elizabeth Wilhelmina, b. March 31st, 1795.

Thomas William, b. 1822.

Edward Keppel, b. 1824.

Henry John, b. 1827.

Wenman Clar b. 1

THOMAS WILLIAM COKE, first Earl of Leicester of the present creation, was born on the 6th May 1754, being the elder of the two sons of Wenman Roberts (afterwards Coke) of Longford, Derbyshire, and later of Holkham, Norfolk, and was baptised ten days after his birth at St. James's, Westminster. He was Member of Parliament for Norfolk 1776–84, 1790–1806; for Derbyshire from 1806–7, and again for Norfolk 1807–32. He was also elected for the county of Norfolk in 1806, but his election was declared void.

The Earl married twice: firstly at Sherborne, 5th October 1775, Jane fourth and youngest daughter of James Lennox Dutton of Sherborne, Gloucestershire, and Loughcrew, co. Meath, and sister of the first Lord Sherborne. She died without male issue 2 June 1800, and was buried at Tittleshall, Norfolk. By this marriage were issue three daughters, viz.:—

(1) *Lady* JANE ELIZABETH, born 2 Dec. 1777, married firstly at Holkham 21 June 1796, Charles Nevinson Howard *styled* Viscount Andover, heir-apparent to John fifteenth Earl of Suffolk. Lord Andover was killed in the lifetime of his father 11th Jan. 1800, through the discharge of his gun, and left no issue. Lady Andover married secondly at St. James's, Westminster, 17 Apr. 1806, Admiral Sir Henry Digby, G.C.B., who died 19 Aug. 1842. She died 29 April 1863, aged 86, and was buried at Brighton. By her second husband she had issue (*see* p. 506).

(2) ANNE MARGARET, born 23 Jan. 1779, married at Holkham 15 Sept. 1794, Thomas Anson, Esq., afterwards (17 Feb. 1806) created Viscount Anson of

Shugborough and Orgrave, co. Stafford. Lord Anson died in St. James's Square, London, 31 July 1818, and was buried at Shugborough. His widow died in Harley Street, 23 May 1843. Lord and Lady Anson had issue (*see* p. 513).

(3) *Lady* Elizabeth Wilhelmina, born 17 Mar. 1795, died 30 Oct. 1873, married 5 Dec. 1822, John Spencer Stanhope of Cannon Hall, Yorks, and left issue (*see* p. 530).

The first Earl of Leicester of Holkham married secondly in St. James's Square, Westminster, 26 Feb. 1822, by special licence, *Lady* Anne Amelia Keppel third daughter of William Charles third Earl of Albemarle. This lady was born 16 June 1803, over three years after the death of the Earl's first wife and over forty-nine years after her husband's birth. The Earl died at Longford Hall, Derbyshire, 30 June 1842, aged 88, and was buried at Tittleshall. His widow married secondly at St. George's, Hanover Square, 25 June 1843, the Right Hon. Edward Ellice, and died at Longford Hall 22 July 1844, aged 41.

By his second marriage the Earl had issue four sons and a daughter, viz :—

(4) Thomas William, second Earl of Leicester of Holkham, of whom hereafter (*see* p. 504).

(5) *Hon.* Edward Keppel Wentworth Coke, born 20 Aug. 1824, Capt. Scots Fusilier Guards, M.P. West Norfolk 1847–52, and High Sheriff for Derbyshire in 1859. He married 5 Aug. 1851, *Hon.* Diana Mary Blanche Georgiana Agar-Ellis third daughter of George James Welbore first Lord Dover, bedchamber-woman to H.R.H. the Princess of Wales 1863. Mr. Edward Coke died 26 May 1889. His widow died 18 July 1890 without issue.

(6) *Hon.* Henry John Coke of Longford Hall, Derbyshire, born 3 Jan. 1827, late Midshipman R.N., served in China 1840–2, Secretary to *Right Hon.* Edward

Horsman, Chief Secretary for Ireland 1865–7, married 23 July 1861, *Lady* Katharine Grey Egerton, Lady-in-Waiting to H.R.H. the Duchess of Teck, second daughter of Thomas second Earl of Wilton, G.C.H., the well-known sportsman and musician. By this lady Mr. Henry Coke has had issue two sons and a daughter—

1) Clement Coke, born 26 Apr. 1862, Lieut. Scots Guards, died without issue 2 Dec. 1901.

2) Reginald Grey Coke, born 10 July 1864, late Lieut. Scots Guards, served in Suakin Campaign 1885, and in South Africa 1901–2 as Lieut. 3rd Batt. Imperial Yeomanry. He married firstly 1887, Elizabeth Wilson, which marriage was dissolved the following year. He married secondly 21 Apr. 1892, Phyllis Susan daughter of Francis William Bott of Somersal, Derbyshire, Esq.

3) Sybil Mary, born 1866, married 15 Feb. 1887, Col. Charles Crutchley, M.V.O., A.A.G. for Recruiting, and has issue—

Gerald Edward Victor, born 1890.

(7) Lieut.-Col. *Hon.* Wenman Clarence Walpole Coke of 34 Wimpole Street, W., born 13 July 1828, educated at Eton, formerly Lieut.-Col. Scots Guards, served in Crimea as A.D.C. to Lord Rokeby 1855, 5th class Medjidie and Sardinian Order of Valour, M.P. for East Norfolk as a Liberal 1858–65, J.P., Norfolk, died unmarried 10 Jan. 1907.

(8) *Lady* Margaret Sophia, born 7 Mar. 1832, married 1st May 1849, as his first wife, Sir Archibald Keppel Macdonald of Woolmer Liphook, Hants, Bt., but died without issue 4th Nov. 1868.

THOMAS WILLIAM COKE, second Earl of Leicester of Holkham (*see* p. 502), was born at Holkham 26th Dec. 1822, and was educated at Eton and Winchester. Lord-Lieutenant of Norfolk 1846–1906, a Member of the Council of the Duchy of Cornwall 1866, and Keeper of the Privy Seal to H.R.H. the Prince of Wales 1870, K.G. 30 June 1873. His Lordship married firstly at Cardington, Bedfordshire, 20 April 1843, Juliana eldest daughter of Samuel Charles Whitbread of Cardington aforesaid, Esq., which lady died at Holkham of bronchitis 21 April 1870, aged 44. By his first wife the Earl has had issue four sons and seven daughters—

(1) THOMAS WILLIAM (COKE) *styled* Viscount COKE, born at Holkham 20 July 1848, educated at Harrow, formerly Col. 2nd Batt. Scots Guards and Lieut.-Col. Commdg. P. of W. Own Norfolk Artillery Militia, E. Div. R.A., a Military A.D.C. to His Majesty the King. Lord-Lieut. of Norfolk from 1906, M.V.O. 1901, C.M.G. 1902, C.V.O. 1905, K.C.V.O. 1906. His Lordship served in the Egyptian campaign of 1882, in Suakin Expedition 1885, and in South Africa 1901–2, when he was in command of the P. of W. Own Artillery Militia and afterwards as Governor of Kimberley. He married at All Saints', Ennismore Gardens, London, 26th Aug. 1879, *Hon.* Alice White second daughter of Luke second Baron Annaly, by whom he has issue three sons and two daughters—

1) *Hon.* THOMAS WILLIAM COKE, born 9 July 1880, a Captain in the Army, formerly in 2nd Batt. Scots Guards, served in South Africa 1902, married in 1905, Marion Gertrude daughter of the late Col. *Hon.* Walter Rudolph Trefusis, C.B., third son of Charles Rudolph nineteenth Baron Clinton.

2) *Hon.* ARTHUR GEORGE COKE, born 6 Apr. 1882, formerly a Midshipman R.N., married in 1906, Phyllis Hermione daughter of Francis Saxham E. Drury of 50 Pont Street, S.W.

3) *Hon.* Roger Coke, born 28 Dec. 1886, Sub-Lieut. R.N. 1906.

4) *Hon.* Marjorie Alice, born 1884.

5) *Hon.* Alexandra Marie Bridget, born 10 Feb. 1891.

(2) Lieut.-Col. *Hon.* Wenman Coke of 8 St. James's Place, London, S.W., born 20 Nov. 1855, educated at Harrow and Trinity College, Cambridge; formerly Major Rifle Brigade and A.D.C. to Viscount Wolseley, K.P.; served in Afghanistan campaign 1879.

(3) *Hon.* Arthur Coke, born 30 April 1858, died an infant.

(4) *Hon.* John Coke, born 30 June 1859, died 30 June 1860.

(5) *Lady* Julia, born 4 Dec. 1844, married at St. George's, Hanover Square, 26 Apr. 1864, Mervyn Wingfield seventh Viscount Powerscourt, who died 1901. Lord and Lady Powerscourt had issue (*see* p. 531).

(6) *Lady* Anne, born 11 Dec. 1845, married 16 Jan. 1874, Major-Gen. Edmund Manningham-Buller second son of Sir Edward Manningham-Buller, first Bt., of Dilhorn, co. Stafford. By him, who died 1897, her Ladyship, who died 23 Jan. 1876, had issue (*see* p. 532).

(7) *Lady* Gertrude, born 5 July 1847, married 5 April 1866 to Charles Adolphus seventh Earl of Dunmore, and has issue (*see* p. 532).

(8) *Lady* Mary, born 18 Sept. 1849, married 18 Dec. 1879, at Holkham, William Heneage sixth Earl of Dartmouth, and has issue (*see* p. 533).

(9) *Lady* Winifred, born 12 Jan. 1851, married 2 Sept. 1873 to Robert Bermingham fourth Earl of Leitrim. By his Lordship, who died 5 Apr. 1892, Lady Leitrim has had issue (*see* p. 534).

(10) *Lady* Margaret, born 26 Apr. 1852, married at Holkham, 2 May 1874, Henry second Baron Belper, and has issue (*see* p. 534).

(11) *Lady* MILDRED, born 24 Jan. 1854, married 5 Nov. 1878, Thomas Francis third Earl of Lichfield. She, although but two years older than her husband, is his first cousin twice removed, being the granddaughter of the first Lord Leicester, who was her husband's father's father's mother's father. Lord and Lady Lichfield have had issue (*see* p. 527).

The second Earl of Leicester married secondly at Latimer, Buckinghamshire, 26 Aug. 1875, *Hon.* Georgiana Caroline Cavendish first daughter of William George second Baron Chesham, by whom, who was born 4 Feb. 1852, he has issue five sons and one daughter—

(12) *Hon.* RICHARD COKE, born 20 Aug. 1876, educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge, formerly Capt. Scots Guards, and served in South Africa 1899–1902.

(13) *Hon.* EDWARD COKE, born 17 Oct. 1879, formerly Lieut. Rifle Brigade, and served in South Africa 1900–2.

(14) *Hon.* JOHN SPENCER COKE, born 30 Sept. 1880, Lieut. Scots Guards, served in South Africa 1902. Married 15 Jan. 1907, Dorothy Olive only child of the *Hon.* Harry Lawson Webster Levy-Lawson.

(15) *Hon.* REGINALD COKE, born 10 Nov. 1883.

(16) *Hon.* LOVEL WILLIAM COKE, born 19 Aug. 1893.

(17) *Lady* MABEL, born 9 Sept. 1878.

Admiral Sir HENRY DIGBY, G.C.B., by his wife *Lady* Jane Elizabeth, eldest daughter of the first Earl of Leicester of Holkham (*see* p. 501), had issue two sons and a daughter—

(1) EDWARD ST. VINCENT ninth Baron Digby, born 21 June 1809, at Forston House, Dorset; educated at Harrow, Lieut. 9th Lancers, Lieut.-Col. Dorset Yeomanry, married 27 June 1837, *Lady* Theresa Anna Maria Fox-Strangways eldest daughter of Henry Stephen third Earl of Ilchester. By her, who died 2 May 1874, at

Minterne House, Dorset, Lord Digby, who died there 12 Oct. 1889, and was buried at Minterne, had issue four sons and three daughters—

1) Edward Henry Trafalgar (Digby) tenth Baron Digby, born 21 Oct. 1846, Col. late Coldstream Guards, Hon. Col. 3rd Batt. Dorsetshire Regiment, M.P. for Dorsetshire 1876–85. He married at Christ Church, Down Street, 19 Sept. 1893, Emily Beryl Sissy elder daughter of *Hon.* Albert Hood, by whom he has issue two sons and three daughters—
   i. *Hon.* Edward Kenelm Digby, born 1 Aug. 1894.
   ii. *Hon.* Robert Henry Digby, born 1903.
   iii. *Hon.* Lettice Theresa, born 16 April 1896
   iv. *Hon.* Geraldine Margot, born 21 Mar. 1898.
   v. *Hon.* Venetia Jane, born 3 Nov. 1900.

2) *Hon.* Almarus Kenelm Digby, born 5 Sept. 1850, died 13 Dec. 1886.

3) *Hon.* Everard Charles Digby, born 6 Sept. 1852, Col. late Grenadier Guards, served in Suakin Expedition 1885, married 2 June 1886, *Lady* Emily Louisa Anne Fitzmaurice only daughter of Henry fourth Marquis of Lansdowne, and by her has issue two sons and a daughter—
   i. Almarus Edward Henry Digby, born 1889.
   ii. Giles Stephen Digby, born 1894.
   iii. Theresa Emily Margery, born 1888.

4) *Hon.* Gerald Fitzmaurice Digby, born 20 Sept. 1858, Comm. R.N., A.D.C. to Lord-Lieut. of Ireland, married 26 July 1906, *Lady* Lilian Mary Harriet Diana Liddell younger daughter of Henry George second Earl of Ravensworth.

5) *Hon.* VICTORIA ALEXANDRINA, born 30 Mar. 1840, married 6 June 1865 to Richard Marker of Combe House, Devon, Esq., and has issue two sons and two daughters.

i. RAYMOND JOHN MARKER, D.S.O., born 18 Apr. 1867. Major Coldstream Guards, served in South Africa 1899–1901 as A.D.C. to Gen. Viscount Kitchener. Priv. Sec. to Right Hon. H. O. Arnold-Forster, Sec. for War 1905, and Assist. Mil. Sec. and Interpreter to Comm.-in-Ch. in India Gen. Viscount Kitchener 1905–6. Married 1906, Beatrice Minnie Shrieve daughter of Sir Thomas Jackson first Bt.

ii. EDWARD RICHARD MARKER, born 19 Nov. 1872.

iii. GERTRUDE MARGARET.

iv. SYBIL.

6) *Hon.* LEONORA CAROLINE, born 8 Nov. 1844, married 5 Jan. 1864, Alexander Hugh fourth Lord Ashburton, who died 18 July 1889, by whom she had issue five sons and two daughters—

i. FRANCIS DENZIL EDWARD fifth Lord Ashburton, born 20 July 1866, married firstly at St. George's, Hanover Square, 25 July 1889, *Hon.* Mabel Edith Hood eldest daughter of Francis Wheler fourth Viscount Hood, who died 1894, by whom he had issue a son and four daughters—

i. *Hon.* ALEXANDER FRANCIS ST. VINCENT BARING, born 7 Ap. 1898.

ii. *Hon.* VENETIA MARJORIE MABEL, born 30 Apr. 1890.

iii. *Hon.* AUREA VERA, born 11 Aug. 1891.

iv. *Hon.* ANGELA MILDRED, born 9 Dec. 1893.

v. *Hon.* VIOLET ALMA MADELINE, born 12 Sept. 1895.

His Lordship married secondly 19 Feb. 1906, Frances daughter of J. C. Donnelly of New York.

ii. *Hon.* FREDERICK ARTHUR BARING, born 18 Sept. 1867, educated at Eton, formerly Lieut. 5th Batt. Royal Fusiliers, Capt. Hants I.Y. (Carabiniers), married 30 April 1890, Laura Louise daughter of F. Hobson, and has issue a daughter—

EVELYN CLAIRE, born 22 March 1891.

iii. *Hon.* ALEXANDER HENRY BARING, of the Grange, Alresford, Hants, born 4 Sept. 1869, educated at Eton.

iv. *Hon.* GUY VICTOR BARING, born 26 Feb. 1873, educated at Eton, Capt. Coldstream Guards, M.P. for Winchester (Conservative) 1906, served in South Africa 1899–1900, and Jubaland expedition 1901. Married 16 July 1903, Olive daughter of Hugh Colin Smith of Mount Clare, Roehampton, S.W., and has issue—

i. OLIVER HUGH BARING, born 19 May 1904.

ii. SIMON ALEXANDER VIVIAN BARING, born 22 Nov. 1905.

v. *Hon.* CARYL DIGBY BARING, born 13 Jan. 1880, educated at Eton, Lieut. Coldstream Guards, A.D.C. to Major-General J. R. Jones, C.V.O., served in South Africa 1899–1902.

vi. *Hon.* LILIAN THERESA CLAIRE, born 28 May 1874, married 5 Mar. 1906, Lieut.-Col. Frederick Lock Adam, M.V.O., Scots Guards, and Mil. Sec. to Viceroy of India.

vii. *Hon.* DOROTHY MARY, born 28 Sept. 1885, died 11 April 1893.

7) *Hon.* MARY THERESA, born 5 Feb. 1848, died 12 Oct. 1896.

(2) Rev. *Hon.* KENELM HENRY DIGBY, M.A., Hon. Canon of Norwich and Rector of Tittleshall, Norfolk, born 18 Aug. 1811, on whom the rank of a Baron's younger son was conferred 1859. He married 13 May 1835, Caroline fifth daughter of Edward Sheppard of Firgrove, co. Salop, Esq., who died 12 Dec. 1866. Canon Digby (who died 4 Apr. 1891) left issue six sons and three daughters—

1) Sir KENELM EDWARD DIGBY, G.C.B., K.C., Permanent Under Sec. of State for the Home Department, born 9 Sept. 1836, married 30 Aug. 1870, *Hon.* Caroline Strutt second daughter of Edward first Lord Belper, and has issue two sons and two daughters—

i. ARTHUR KENELM DIGBY, born 19 May 1879, Lieut. R.A. Served in South Africa as Lieut. I.Y.

ii. EDWARD AYLMER DIGBY, born 3 Oct. 1883, Lieut. R.N. 1903.

iii. EMILY, born 17 Jan. 1874.

iv. LETTICE, born 31 July 1877.

2) HENRY ALMARUS DIGBY, born 9 Feb. 1843, Capt. R.N. (retired), J.P. Norfolk. Served in Indian Mutiny 1858, and in action at Simono-seki, Japan, 1864. Married 24 Sept. 1874, Leonora Sabrina daughter of the Rev. George Leigh Wasey.

3) William Fitzgerald Digby, born 24 July 1844, and died 18 Nov. 1898, having married 26 Oct. 1869, Charlotte Mary daughter of the Rev. Henry Thomas Lee, by whom he had issue a son and three daughters—

i. Kenelm William Digby, born 1873.
ii. Alice, born 1874.
iii. Catherine Lucy, born 1877.
iv. Bertha Emily, born 1883.

4) Rev. Charles Tilton Digby, born 24 Nov. 1845, M.A., Corpus Christi Coll. Oxford. Rector of All Saints', Warham, from 1874.

5) Reginald Digby of Geashill, King's co., J.P., born 30 Apr. 1847. Married 7 Nov. 1872, Caroline Grace second daughter of Rev. Thomas Fremeaux Boddington, Rector of Badger, and has issue a son and three daughters—

i. Lionel Kenelm Digby, born 15 Nov. 1883.
ii. Ethel Margaret, born 1873.
iii. Edith, born 1878.
iv. Mabel, born 1880.

6) Algernon Digby of Highfield, Fakenham, Norfolk, born 23 May 1849, married 29 Dec. 1888, Richenda Catherine eldest daughter of Capt. Philip Hamond, 34th Reg., and has issue two sons and three daughters—

i. John Kenelm Digby, born 21 Nov. 1890.
ii. Thomas Hankinson Digby, born 5 Feb. 1892.
iii. Almeria Catherine, born 14 Mar. 1894.
iv. Bridget Mary, born 19 Feb. 1899.
v. Noel Richenda, born 1904.

7) Caroline Jane, born 24 Nov. 1838, married 15 Dec. 1864, Arthur George Watson, D.C.L. of Uplands, Wadhurst, Sussex, and has issue two sons and four daughters—

i. Arthur Kenelm Watson, born 23 May 1867.
ii. Hubert Digby Watson, born 21 Dec. 1869.
iii. Mildred Caroline.
iv. Lucy Evelyn.
v. Amy Gertrude.
vi. Winifred Digby.

8) Lucy Georgiana, born 16 July 1840, died 3 Jan. 1877.

9) Emily, born 13 Sept. 1841, married 23 Jan. 1862, Edward North Buxton, formerly Chairman of London School Board, and has issue three sons and five daughters—

i. Gerald Buxton of Birch Hall, Theydon Bois, Epping, born 30 Oct. 1862, married 1890, Lucy Ethel 5th daughter of Sir Joseph Whitwell Pease, first Bt., by whom he has had issue two sons and two daughters—

i. Edward North Buxton, born 1894.
ii. Joseph Alfred Buxton, born 1904.
iii. Blanche Emily, born 15 Nov. 1891.
iv. Rebekah Mary, born 1900.

ii. Cyril Digby Buxton, born 1865, died 10 May 1892.

iii. Anthony Buxton, born 1881, Trin. Coll. Cambridge, B.A. 1904.

iv. Geraldine, born 30 Oct. 1862, married 21 Nov. 1888, Francis Dent, barrister-at-law, and has issue, two sons and a daughter—

i. Geoffrey Dent, born 1891.
ii. Arthur Cyril Dent, born 1893.
iii. Mary Constance, born 1890.

v. Ella, born Oct. 1863.

vi. Hannah Maud, born May 1872, married 1900, Francis Hubert Barclay of the Warren, Cromer, and has issue two daughters—

i. Joan Maud, born 1901.

ii. Helen Catherine, born 1904.

vii. Clare Emily, born 1873.

viii. Theresa, born 1874.

(3) Jane Elizabeth, born 3 Apr. 1807, married firstly in Harley Street, St. Marylebone, 15 Oct. 1824, as his second wife, Edward second Baron (and afterwards first Earl) Ellenborough, but was divorced by Act of Parliament, 8 Apr. 1830. She married secondly, 10 Nov. 1832, Charles Theodore Herbert, Baron von Venningen, Prime Minister of Bavaria, who committed suicide on her leaving him. She married finally Sheikh Medjuel el Mezrab, an Arab General in the Greek army. She died in Damascus 11 Oct. 1881.

Thomas, first Viscount Anson, by his wife Anne Margaret second daughter of the first Earl of Leicester of Holkham (*see* p. 502), had issue six sons and five daughters—

(1) Thomas William (Anson) first Earl of Lichfield, of whom hereafter (*see* p. 522).

(2) Major-Gen. *Hon.* George Anson, born 13 Oct. 1797, Commander-in-Chief in India, M.P. South Staffordshire, died in India 27 May 1857, having married 30 Nov. 1830, *Hon.* Isabella Elizabeth Annabella Weld-Forester third daughter of Cecil Weld first Lord Forester, who died 29 Dec. 1858. They had issue three daughters—

1) Isabella Maria Katherine, married at Repton, co. Derby, 8 Feb. 1858, Richard William Penn third Earl Howe, who died 25 Sept. 1900. By him she had issue three sons and two daughters—

i. A son died in infancy.

ii. Richard George Penn fourth Earl Howe, born 28 April 1861, at Charles Street, Berkeley Square, London, educated at Eton and Christchurch, Oxford, M.P. Wycombe Division of Bucks 1885-1900 (Conservative), Treasurer of the Household 1896-1900, and a Lord in Waiting 1900-1903, since when he has been Lord Chamberlain to H.M. the Queen. G.C.V.O. 1903, Grand Cordon of Order of Leopold of Belgium, a Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour, and a Knight Grand Cross of the Saviour of Greece, married at St. George's, Hanover Square, 4 June 1883, *Lady* Georgiana Elizabeth Spencer-Churchill fifth daughter of John seventh Duke of Marlborough, who died 9 Feb. 1906, and by her has had issue one child—

Francis Richard Henry Penn Curzon *styled* Viscount Curzon, born 1 May 1884, educated at Eton and Oxford University.

iii. *Hon.* Frederick Graham Curzon-Howe, born 5 March 1868, Foreign Service Messenger, married 11 Sept. 1894, Minnie Gertrude Ellis daughter of Capt. Dodsworth Jeffreys, the well-known actress (who obtained a divorce 1903), by whom he had issue a son and a daughter—

i. Chambré George William Penn Curzon-Howe, born 19 Oct. 1898.

ii. Evelyn Ellis Isabella, born 9 July 1897.

iv. *Lady* Evelyn Alice, born 10 April 1862, married 25 April 1896 to John Eyre of 20 Curzon Street, Mayfair, Esq.

v. *Lady* EDITH CECILIA, born 10 May 1864, married 18 April 1896, Harry Walter Franklin of 12 Norfolk Crescent, W., Esq., by whom she has issue a son and a daughter—

i. CHARLES PETER DAMIAN FRANKLIN, born 1900.

ii. VIOLET CATHERINE CECILIA MARY, born 1897.

2) ALICE LOUISA married 18 March 1865, *Hon.* George Wentworth-Fitzwilliam of Milton, Peterborough. By him (who died 4 March 1874) she left at her death on 14 Jan. 1879, issue one son and two daughters—

i. GEORGE CHARLES WENTWORTH-FITZWILLIAM of Milton, born 2 Jan. 1866, married 28 Dec. 1886, Evelyn only daughter of Charles Stephen Lyster, and has issue two sons—

i. GEORGE JAMES CHARLES WENTWORTH-FITZWILLIAM, born 19 May 1888.

ii. WILLIAM THOMAS GEORGE WENTWORTH-FITZWILLIAM, born 28 May 1904.

ii. ALICE MARY, born 18 Oct. 1869, married 23 July 1892, Arthur Watkin Williams-Wynn, of 71 Eccleston Square, S.W., and has issue a son and two daughters—

i. CHARLES WATKIN WILLIAMS-WYNN, born 19 May 1896.

ii. MAUD ANNORA, born 10 Aug. 1893.

iii. ALICE NESTA MARGARET, born 10 Nov. 1894.

iii. MAUD, born 27 Feb. 1871, married 18 July 1892, *Hon.* Cospatrick Thomas Dundas, who died 23 Nov. 1906, and has issue a son and three daughters—

i. John George Lawrence Dundas, born 3 Nov. 1893.

ii. Winifred Maud, born 13 Apr. 1895.

iii. Elgiva Margaret, born 9 Nov. 1897.

iv. Ida Victoria Alice, born 24 May 1905.

3) Geraldine Georgiana Mary, married 4 March 1862, at St. George's, Hanover Square, Frederick William John third Marquis of Bristol, by whom she has had issue two daughters—

i. *Lady* Katherine Adine Geraldine, born 1864, married 4 Mar. 1886, Allan Harvey Drummond, Esq. of 7 Ennismore Gardens, S.W., and has issue surviving a son and three daughters—

i. Frederick Harvey John Drummond, born 24 May 1892.

ii. Margaret Hester, born 8 July 1888.

iii. Alice Mary, born 16 Aug. 1890.

iv. Constance Adine Maud, born 15 Jan. 1895.

ii. *Lady* Alice Adeliza, born 1874, married 29 Aug. 1896, George third Baron Hylton, by whom she has issue two sons and two daughters—

i. Hon. William George Hervey Joliffe, born 2 Dec. 1898.

ii. Hon. Thomas Hedworth Joliffe, born 6 Oct. 1900.

iii. Hon. Mary Lepel, born 25 May 1897.

iv. Hon. a daughter, born 23 Nov. 1906.

(3) *Hon.* Charles Littleton Anson, born 28 Jan. 1799, accidentally killed off Lissa by an explosion of a gun on board the *Bacchante* frigate, 23 Sept. 1812.

(4) *Hon.* William Anson, Capt. R.N., C.B., born 26 Feb. 1801, died 19 Oct. 1830.

(5) *Hon.* Henry Anson, born 1804, died 1827.

(6) *Hon.* Edward Harcourt Anson, born 1808, died 1817.

(7) *Hon.* Anne Margaret, born 3 Oct. 1796, married in the Chapel at Holkham, Norfolk, 12 Aug. 1819, as his second wife, Archibald John fourth Earl of Rosebery, who died 4 March 1868. By her husband *Lady* Rosebery, who died 19 Aug. 1882, had issue two daughters—

1) *Lady* Anne, married 30 May 1848, *Right Hon.* Henry Tufnell, M.P., who died 15 June 1854. She, on her death, 17 Sept. 1862, left issue one son—

i. Henry Tufnell.

2) *Lady* Louisa, died unmarried 23 March 1870.

(8) *Hon.* Georgiana, died 10 Feb. 1821.

(9) *Hon.* Frances Elizabeth, married firstly 12 Sept. 1835, *Hon.* Charles John Murray (died 1 Aug. 1851), by whom she had two sons—

1) Charles Archibald Murray, born 10 Oct. 1836, married firstly 27 Apr. 1865, *Lady* Adelaide Emily Fielding, third daughter of William Basil Percy seventh Earl of Denbigh, who died 24 May 1870. By her Mr. Charles Murray had issue two sons and two daughters—

i. Ronald William Murray, born 10 May 1866, married 16 Feb. 1904, Constance Mary Jane daughter of Gen. Sir Richard Chamber Hayes Taylour, G.C.B.

ii. Archibald John Percy Murray, born 16 July 1867.

iii. Margaret Frances, born 1868, married 10 July 1902, Arthur Holford, formerly Lieut. 19th Hussars.

iv. Alice Grace, died 17 Feb. 1895.

Mr. Charles Archibald Murray married secondly 11 June 1878, Blanche fifth daughter of Sir Thomas Moncreiffe seventh Bt., by whom he has issue a son and two daughers—

v. Charles John Murray, born 1 Dec. 1881.

vi. Gertrude Blanche, born 1879, married 12 June 1907, Alexander Ronald MacGregor.

vii. Edith Lilian, born 1884.

2) Frederick John George Murray, born 18 May 1839, late Col. 3rd Dragoon Guards.

Mrs. Charles John Murray married secondly 10 Sept. 1853, Ambrose Isted, Esq. of Ecton, co. Northampton, and died 25 Dec. 1899 leaving by him no issue.

(10) *Hon.* Frederica Sophia, married 21 Mar. 1838, *Hon.* Bouverie Francis Primrose, C.B. She died 11 Oct. 1867, leaving by him, who died 20 Mar. 1898, six sons and four daughters.

1) Francis Archibald Primrose, born 29 Oct. 1843, married 12 Nov. 1872, Jane daughter of George King of Warratagh, Sydney, N.S.W., and has issue a son and six daughters—

i. Archibald Bouverie Primrose, born 23 June 1881.

ii. Frederica Jane.

iii. Dorothy, married 1894, Prof. Anderson Stuart, M.D., LL.D., Professor of Physiology, and Dean of Faculty of Medicine in Sydney University.

iv. Louisa Wilhelmina.

v. Evelyn, married 20 June 1906, Major John Colpoys Connor, R.A.M.C.

vi. Constance Margaret.

vii. Gwendoline Gertrude Maude.

2) Sir Henry William Primrose, K.C.B., C.S.I., Commr. of Customs, born 22 Aug. 1846, married 2 Nov. 1888, Helen Mary daughter of Gilbert McMieking of Miltonise, co. Wigtown, and has issue one son—

i. Archibald Henry Reginald Primrose, born 14 Dec. 1889.

3) Gilbert Edward Primrose, born 27 Feb. 1848, married 13 May 1893, Jessie Katherine daughter of Lieut. Costelloe of Lackeen Castle, Birr.

4) George Anson Primrose, Rear-Adm. R.N., born 21 Sept. 1849, married 30 April 1889, Mary Cecilia daughter of Thomas E. Kenny, M.P., of Halifax, Nova Scotia, and has issue—

i. Marjorie Frances, born 9 Mar. 1890.

ii. Adela Blanch Margaret, born 5 Feb. 1891.

5) Arthur John Primrose, born 18 June, 1853, Bengal C.S., died unmarried 13 Sept. 1888.

6) Edward Neil Primrose, born 19 Nov. 1854.

7) Margaret Sophia, died 26 Dec. 1858.

8) Alice Jane, born 1842, married firstly 16 Apr. 1868, George William Mercer-Henderson of Fordel, co. Fife, who died without issue 17 Oct. 1881. She married secondly 27 Dec. 1887, John Bellingham of La Trouvaille, Tresserbe, Aix-en-Savoie, France.

9) Frederica Mary, born 1845.

10) Charlotte Henrietta, born 1851, married 10 Jan. 1878, Comm. Carleton Tufnel, R.N., retired. He died 10 Jan. 1893.

(11) *Hon.* Elizabeth Jane, born 26 Feb. 1816, married

18 July 1837, in London, Henry Manners third Lord Waterpark. Her Ladyship died 15 Sept. 1894, leaving by Lord Waterpark, who died 31 March 1863, one son and three daughters—

1) Henry Anson fourth Lord Waterpark, born 14 Apr. 1839, married in 1873 Emily daughter of John Stenning, and has issue two sons and three daughters—
   i. *Hon.* Henry Cavendish, Rifle Brigade, born 3rd March 1875, died unmarried 22 Oct. 1897.
   ii. *Hon.* Charles Frederick Cavendish, born 11 May, 1883, Lieut. R.N. 1904.
   iii. *Hon.* Mary, born 1873.
   iv. *Hon.* Winifred, born 1880, married 8 Mar. 1904, George Ashton Strutt of Rockhouse Cromford, Derbyshire.
   v. *Hon.* Norah Lilian, born 1881.

2) *Hon.* Eliza Anne, married 12 July 1859, Haughton Charles Okeover of Okeover, Derbyshire, and has issue a son and seven daughters—
   i. Haughton Ealdred Okeover, M.V.O., born 10 May 1875.
   ii. Mabel Alice, born 1860.
   iii. *Hon.* Maude, born 1861, Maid of Honour to Queen Victoria 1884–7, married firstly, 11 Oct. 1887, as his second wife, Sir Andrew Barclay Walker, first Bt., by whom, who died 27 Feb. 1893, she had no issue. She married secondly, 30 July 1895, John Frederick Lort-Philips of Lawrenny Park, Pembroke.
   iv. Ruth Isabel, born 1864, married 1903 Capt. Hervey Ronald Bruce.
   v. Edith Mary, born 1867, married 1891 *Hon.* Herbert Tongue Allsopp, and has issue one daughter—
      Cynthia Bridget, born 1895.

vi. Ethel Blanche, born 1869, married 1899, Sir Peter Carlaw Walker, second Bt., and has issue one son and one daughter—

i. Ian Peter Andrew Monro Walker, born 30 Nov. 1902.

ii. Enid, born 1900.

vii. Mercy Lilian, born 1870, married 1897 *Hon.* Assheton Nathaniel Curzon, and has issue one son and three daughters—

i. Ralph Okeover Nathaniel Curzon, born 1904.

ii. Joan Doreen, born 1898.

iii. Rhona Lilian, born 1900.

iv. Vera Lilian (twin), born 1900.

viii. Victoria Alexandrina, born 1879.

3) *Hon.* Adelaide, Maid of Honour to Queen Victoria, born 1841, married 3 Dec. 1863, Samuel William Clowes, M.P., who died 1893, by whom she has had issue two sons and three daughters—

i. Henry Arthur Clowes of Norbury Hall, Derbyshire, born 1867, married 1899 Louisa Lucy daughter of Rear-Adm. *Hon.* Algernon Charles Littleton, and has issue three sons and a daughter—

i. Henry Samuel Littleton Clowes, born 1900.

ii. Legh Algernon Clowes, born 1901.

iii. William Josceline Clowes, born 1905.

iv. Margaret Violet Louisa, born 1903.

ii. Ernest William Clowes, D.S.O., born 1869.

iii. Violet, born 1871.

iv. Adelaide Constance, born 1873.

v. Alice Diana, born 1875, married 1906 Col. Frank Robert Crofton Carleton, A.A.G., Eastern Command.

4) *Hon.* Susan Frederica, died unmarried.

Thomas William, second Viscount Anson (*see* p. 513), created 15 Sept. 1831 Earl of Lichfield, was born 20 Oct. 1795. He died 18 March 1854, having married 11 Feb. 1819, Louisa Catherine daughter of Nathaniel Philips of Slebech Hall, Pembroke, and by her, who died 20 Aug. 1879, had issue four sons and four daughters—

(1) Thomas George, second Earl of Lichfield, of whom hereafter (p. 527).

(2) *Hon.* William Victor Leopold Horatio Anson, born 1 Aug. 1833, died 1856.

(3) *Hon.* Augustus Henry Archibald Anson, V.C., born 5 Mar. 1835; Lieut.-Col. late 8th Hussars, M.P. Lichfield 1859 to 1868. Married 1 Dec. 1863, Amelia Maria eldest daughter of the Right Rev. Thomas Legh Claughton, Bishop of St. Albans, and died 17 Nov. 1877 without issue. His widow remarried 17 August 1881 the eighth Duke of Argyll.

(4) Right Rev. *Hon.* Adelbert John Robert Anson, D.D., born 20 Dec. 1840, Canon of Lichfield, formerly Bishop of Qu'Appelle, Canada, 1884–9.

(5) *Lady* Louisa Mary Anne, married as his first wife, 26 Nov. 1838, Edward King Tenison of Kilronan Castle, co. Roscommon, and died 24 Aug. 1882, leaving issue two daughters—

1) Louisa Frances Mary, married 14 June 1866 as his first wife, John Baptist Joseph twelfth Baron Dormer, and dying 9 Sept. 1868, had issue a son and a daughter—

i. Henry Edward Dormer, born 4 March and died 24 Dec. 1867.

ii. *Hon.* Florence Edith Louise, born 8 Sept. 1868, married 20 July 1892, Henry Hunter of Kilburn Hall, co. Derby, and by him has issue one son—

Henry John Francis, born 1893.

2) Florence Margaret Christina, married 23 Jan. 1872 Henry Ernest eighth Earl of Kingston, by whom, who died 13 Jan. 1896, she has had issue three sons and a daughter—

i. Edward King *styled* Viscount Kingsborough, born 9 and died 21 June 1873.

ii. Henry Edwyn ninth Earl of Kingston, born 19 Sept. 1874, married 3 Feb. 1897, Ethel Lisette daughter of Sir Andrew Barclay Walker, Bt., and has issue a son and two daughters—

i. Robert Henry Ethelbert *styled* Viscount Kingsborough, born 27 Nov. 1897.

ii. *Lady* Sheelah Florence Lisette, born 15 Apr. 1900.

iii. *Lady* Bridget Honor, born 20 Sept. 1902.

iii. *Hon.* Edmund King, born and died 7 Apr. 1876.

iv. *Lady* Edith Charlotte Harriett, born 7 Oct. 1878.

(6) *Lady* Anne Frederica, married 29 Aug. 1843, as his first wife, Frances Wemyss Charteris tenth Earl of Wemyss and March, and died 22 July 1896, leaving by him five sons and three daughters—

1) Francis Douglas, born 11 Nov. 1844, died unmarried 22 July 1879.

2) Alfred Walter Douglas, born 2 June 1847, Lieut. 71st Foot, died at sea 24 Nov. 1873.

3) Hugo Richard *styled* Lord Elcho, born 23 Aug. 1857, M.P. Haddington 1883–5 and for Ipswich

1886–95, married 9 Aug. 1883, Mary Constance daughter of *Hon.* Percy Scawen Wyndham, M.P., and has had issue four sons and three daughters—

i. Hugo Francis Douglas, born 28 Dec. 1884.

ii. Guy Lawrence Douglas, born 23 May 1886.

iii. Colin Charteris Douglas, born 1 June 1889, died 27 Dec. 1892.

iv. Ivo Alan Douglas, born 6 Oct. 1896.

v. Cynthia Mary Evelyn, born 27 Sept. 1887.

vi. Mary, born 24 Oct. 1895.

vii. Irena Corona, born 31 May 1902.

4) *Hon.* Alan Dudley Douglas, born 19 March 1860, Lieut. Coldstream Guards, died 9 Jan. 1901.

5) *Hon.* Evan Edward Charteris Douglas, born 29 Jan. 1864. Barrister-at-Law.

6) *Lady* Evelyn, married 4 June 1872, John fourth Viscount de Vesci, who died 6 July 1903. By him she had issue—

Hon. Mary Gertrude, born 10 Apr. 1889.

7) *Lady* Lilian Harriet, married firstly 27 Nov. 1872, Sir Henry Carstairs Pelly, third Bt., of Upton, who died 4 June 1877, leaving issue two daughters—

i. Annie Evelyn, lady-in-waiting to H.R.H. the Duchess of Connaught.

ii. Constance Lilian, married 25 Jan. 1900 to David Alexander Edward *styled* Lord Balcarres, by whom she has issue a son and two daughters—

i. Robert David Alexander Lindsay, born 20 Nov. 1900.

ii. Margaret Cynthia, born 27 June 1902.

iii. Cynthia Ann, born 21 June 1904.

Lady Lilian Pelly married secondly 31 July 1882, Sir Henry Francis Yorke, K.C.B., and has issue one son—

i. Maurice Yorke, born 1883.

8) *Lady* Hilda, married, as his first wife, 4 Dec. 1880, William St. John Freemantle ninth Viscount Midleton, and died 1 Aug. 1901, leaving issue one son and four daughters—

i. *Hon.* George St. John Brodrick, born 21 Feb. 1888.

ii. *Hon.* Muriel, born 23 Nov. 1881, married 30 Nov. 1901, *Hon.* Dudley Churchill Majoribanks, D.S.O., M.V.O., and has issue one daughter—

i. Moira, born 1 Oct. 1902.

iii. *Hon.* Sybil, born 9 Mar. 1885.

iv. *Hon.* Aileen Hilda, born 13 Aug. 1890.

v. *Hon.* Moyra, born 11 Jan. 1897.

(7) *Lady* Harriet Frances Maria, married 7 June 1851, Augustus Henry sixth Lord Vernon, who died 1 May 1883. Her Ladyship died 15 Feb. 1898, leaving issue four sons and six daughters—

1) George William Henry seventh Lord Vernon, born 25 Feb. 1854, married 14 July 1885, Frances Margaret daughter of F. C. Lawrance of New York, and died 15 Dec. 1898, leaving issue by her two sons and a daughter—

i. George Francis Augustus eighth Lord Vernon, born 28 Sept. 1888.

ii. *Hon.* Francis William Lawrance Venables-Vernon, born 6 Nov. 1889.

iii. *Hon.* Fanny Lawrance, born 8 July 1886.

2) *Hon.* William Frederick Cuthbert Venables-Vernon, born 18 July 1856, married 17 Apr. 1884, Louisa third daughter of Brig.-Gen. D. M. Frost, U.S.A., and has had issue two sons and two daughters—

i. Richard Henry Venables-Vernon, born 27 Jan. 1885.

ii. William Walter Venables-Vernon, born 22 Apr. 1890.

iii. Diana Mary, born 10 July 1886, died 1 Feb. 1887.

iv. Dorothy Evelyn, born 19 Jan., died 11 July 1888.

3) *Hon.* Richard Hugo Venables-Vernon, born 25 May 1858, died 11 March 1862.

4) *Hon.* Walter Venables-Vernon, born 20 July 1860, died 2 March 1862.

5) *Hon.* Diana, born 22 Feb. 1852, married 4 May 1896, Charles Edmund Newton of Mickeover Manor, Derby.

6) *Hon.* Mildred, born 8 Feb. 1853, married 2 Nov. 1878, *Hon.* Henry Augustus Stanhope, and has issue three daughters—

i. Hester, born 10 Dec. 1879.

ii. Ghita, born 26 Nov. 1881.

iii. Cicely, born 29 Oct. 1884.

7) Muriel, died an infant, 27 Feb. 1863.

8) *Hon.* Margaret, born 15 May 1865, married 4 Aug. 1887, Rev. Frederick Tufnell, and died 27 Dec. 1888, leaving issue a daughter—

Honoria Margaret, born 21 Dec. 1888.

9) *Hon.* Alice, born 13 Feb. 1868, married 1 Feb. 1896, Rev. Somerset Corry Lowry, and has issue one son—

Hugh Vernon Lowry, born 1897.

10) *Hon.* ADELA, born 12 Oct. 1870, married 9 Apr. 1898, Capt. Algernon Horatio Anson, R.N., and has issue—

i. JOHN HENRY ALGERNON ANSON, born 13 Jan. 1897.

ii. EDWARD REYNELL ANSON, born 31 Jan. 1902.

(8) *Lady* GWENDOLINE ISABELLA ANNA MARIA, married 19 Apr. 1865, Nicholas Power O'Shea of Gardenmorris, co. Waterford. He died 30 March 1902, having had issue three sons and two daughters—

1) Major RICHARD ALFRED POER O'SHEA, of Gardenmorris aforesaid, born 6 Aug. 1867.

2) JOHN MARCUS POER O'SHEA, R.I.C., born 1869, married 22 Sept. 1900, Myrtle Constance third daughter of Col. Yuyr Henry Burges of Parkanaur, and has issue—

A daughter, born 19 Apr. 1903.

3) GEORGE IVER POER O'SHEA, born 4 June 1873, Lieut. Leinster Regt.

4) GWENDOLEN, born 1866.

5) ALINE ANGELA, born 1879.

THOMAS GEORGE (ANSON) second Earl of Lichfield (*see* p. 522), born 15 Aug. 1825, married 10 Apr. 1855, *Lady* Harriett Georgiana Louisa Hamilton eldest daughter of James first Duke of Abercorn. The Earl died 7 Jan. 1892, leaving by his Countess eight sons and five daughters—

(1) THOMAS FRANCIS third Earl of Lichfield, born 31 Jan. 1856, married 5 Nov. 1878, his cousin, Lady Mildred Coke youngest daughter of Thomas William second Earl of Leicester (*see* p. 506), by whom he has had issue three sons and three daughters—

1) THOMAS EDWARD *styled* Viscount Anson, born 9 Dec. 1885.

2) *Hon.* ARTHUR AUGUSTUS ANSON, born 20 July, 1887.

3) *Hon.* RUPERT ANSON, born 7 Nov. 1889.

4) *Lady* BERTHA, born 22 Aug. 1879, married 23 Oct. 1902, *Hon.* Thomas Henry Frederick Egerton, and has issue one daughter—

MILDRED HELEN, born 15 Nov. 1903.

5) *Lady* MABEL, born 18 July 1882.

6) *Lady* VIOLET, born 21 April 1886.

(2) *Hon.* GEORGE AUGUSTUS ANSON, late Capt. R.A., born 22 Dec. 1857, married 27 Sept. 1884, Blanche Mary daughter of George Miller of Brentry, co. Gloucester, and has issue two sons and a daughter—

1) JOHN GEORGE ANSON, born 14 July 1886.

2) CLAUD RONALD ANSON, born 3 May 1895.

3) BARBARA GRACE, born 4 March 1889.

(3) *Hon.* HENRY JAMES ANSON, born 20 Dec. 1858, Major H.L.I., married 27 Oct. 1902, *Lady* Adelaide Audrey Ryder daughter of Henry Dudley fourth Earl of Harrowby, but died without issue, 28 Feb. 1904.

(4) *Hon.* FREDERIC WILLIAM ANSON, born 4 Feb. 1862, married 3 Aug. 1886, Florence Louisa daughter of John Henry Bagot Lane of King's Bromley, Staffordshire, and has issue three sons and three daughters—

1) ERNALD HENRY ANSON, born 28 June, 1893.

2) ARTHUR ANSON,
3) FREDERIC ANSON, } born 3 Mar. 1896, twins.

4) HELEN FRANCES, born 7 June 1892.

5) SIBYL, born 24 Sept. 1894.

6) BERYL, born 12 Nov. 1904.

(5) *Hon.* CLAUD ANSON, born 11 Jan. 1864, married 27 Feb. 1901, *Lady* Clodagh Beresford youngest daughter of John Henry fifth Marquess of Waterford, and has issue a son and a daughter—

1) ANTHONY JOHN ANSON, born 1 Jan. 1904.

2) CLODAGH BLANCHE, born 28 Feb. 1902.

(6) *Hon.* Francis Anson, born 7 Mar. 1867, married 15 June 1892, Caroline second daughter of George Cleveland of Texas, U.S.A., and has issue four sons and a daughter—

1) Thomas George Anson, born 27 July 1894.
2) Henry Adelbert Anson, born 21 Dec. 1895.
3) William Alfred Anson, born 19 Mar. 1897.
4) Francis Edward Anson, born 16 Feb. 1901.
5) Frances, born 10 May 1893.

(7) *Hon.* William Anson, born 19 Apr. 1872.

(8) *Hon.* Alfred Anson, born 15 Apr. 1876.

(9) *Lady* Florence Beatrice, born 1860, married 15 Aug. 1885, Col. Henry Streatfield, M.V.O., and has issue one son—

Henry Sidney Streatfield, born 1886.

(10) *Lady* Beatrice, married 30 July 1890, Capt. Richard Hamilton Rawson of Woodhurst, Sussex, and has issue a son and two daughters—

1) Richard Geoffrey Hamilton Rawson, born 29 July 1896.
2) Beatrice Violet, born 6 May 1892.
3) Dorothy Ella, born 2 Apr. 1899.

(11) *Lady* Mary Maud, married 19 July 1893, *Hon.* Edward Alan Dudley Ryder, and has issue a son and two daughters—

1) Henry Dudley Ryder, born 30 Nov. 1894.
2) Evelyn Maud, born 7 Jan. 1897.
3) Katharine, born 16 Jan. 1899.

(12) *Lady* Edith, married 29 Apr. 1895, Lionel Fortescue third Earl of Lovelace, and has issue a son and three daughters—

1) Peter Malcolm *styled* Viscount Ockham, born 30 March 1905.
2) *Lady* Evelyn Catherine, born 3 Mar. 1896.
3) *Lady* Phyllis Edith, born 19 Mar. 1897.
4) *Lady* Rosemary Diana, born 6 Feb. 1902.

(13) *Lady* Evelyn, died unmarried 2 July 1895.

John Spencer Stanhope of Cannon Hall, Yorkshire, who married Lady Elizabeth Wilhelmina Coke third daughter of the first Earl of Leicester of Holkham (*see* p. 502), had issue two sons and four daughters—

(1) Sir Walter Thomas William Spencer-Stanhope, K.C.B., born 21 Dec. 1827, married 17 Jan. 1856, Elizabeth Julia daughter of Sir John Jacob Buxton, Bt., and by her, who died 30 Sept. 1800, has had issue five sons and six daughters—

1) John Montague Spencer-Stanhope, born 31 Dec. 1860, married 15 April 1890, Ida May second daughter of Sir Lionel Milborne Swinnerton Pilkington, Bt., and has issue one daughter—

Margaret Elizabeth Ida.

2) Walter Spencer-Stanhope, born 17 Nov. 1861, late Capt. 19th Hussars.

3) Edward Collingwood Spencer-Stanhope, born 2 March 1863, died 6 July 1906.

4) Hugh Robert Spencer-Stanhope, born 21 Apr. 1864, died 6 Jan. 1865.

5) Philip Bertie Spencer-Stanhope, born 17 Dec. 1868, married 1 June 1904, Theodora Grace daughter of John Sheddon Scrimgeour of Nattworthy Manor.

6) Mary Gertrude Elizabeth.

7) Cecily Winifred, married 24 Oct. 1899, Lieut.-Col. FitzGerald Wintour, and died 31 Dec. 1904, without issue.

8) Margaret Isabel.

9) Alice Mildred, married 31 Mar. 1891, Charles Arthur Fellowes, and died 10 Aug. 1892, leaving issue one daughter—

Mildred Winifred.

10) Winifred Julia.

11) Mary, born and died 7 Feb. 1875.

(2) John Roddam Spencer-Stanhope, born 21 Jan. 1829, married 10 Jan. 1859, Elizabeth third daughter of John James King of Preston Condover, Hants, and widow of Capt. George Frederick Dawson, and had issue—

Mary, who died unmarried.

(3) Anna Maria Wilhelmina, married March 1853, Percival Andree Pickering, Q.C., Recorder of Pontefract and Attorney-General for the County Palatine. She died 23 Dec. 1901, leaving issue two sons and two daughters—

1) Percival Spencer Umfreville Pickering, F.R.S., born 6 March 1858.

2) Rowland Neville Umfreville Pickering, born 28 Aug. 1861.

3) Mary Evelyn.

4) Anna Maria Diana Wilhelmina.

(4) Eliza Anne, married 28 June 1858, Rev. Richard St. John Tyrwhitt, and died 8 Sept. of the next year, leaving issue one son—

1) Walter Spencer-Stanhope Tyrwhitt, born 6 Sept. 1859.

(5) Anne Alicia, died 1902.

(6) Louisa Elizabeth, died 13 March 1867.

Mervyn Wingfield, seventh Viscount Powerscourt, who married *Lady* Julia eldest daughter of the second Earl of Leicester of Holkham (*see* p. 505), had issue two sons and three daughters—

(1) Mervyn Richard, eighth Viscount Powerscourt, M.V.O., born 16 July 1880, married 9 June 1903, Sybil second daughter of the late Walter Playdell Bouverie

of Market Lavington, Wilts, and has issue a son and a daughter—

1) *Hon.* Mervyn Patrick Wingfield, born 22 Aug. 1905.

2) Doreen Julia, born 20 Mar. 1904.

(2) *Hon.* Maurice Anthony Wingfield, Lieut. Rifle Brigade, born 21 July 1883, married 10 Oct. 1906, Sybil Frances only daughter of F. D. Layland of the Vine, Basingstoke.

(3) *Hon.* Olive Elizabeth, born 6 Nov. 1884.

(4) *Hon.* Clare Meriel, born 5 June 1886.

(5) *Hon.* Lilah Katherine Julia, born 13 Jan. 1888.

Major-General Edmund Manningham-Buller, who married *Lady* Anne second daughter of the second Earl of Leicester of Holkham (*see* p. 505), had issue one son and one daughter—

(1) Mervyn Edward Manningham-Buller, late Capt. Rifle Brigade, born 16 Jan. 1876, married 8 July 1903, *Hon.* Lilah Constance Cavendish only surviving daughter of Charles Compton William third Lord Chesham, and has issue a son and a daughter—

1) Reginald Edward Manningham-Buller, born 1 Aug. 1905.

2) Evelyn Constance, born 22 June 1904.

(2) Julia, born 4 Jan. 1875, married 4 May 1894, Herbert Francis Smith, and has issue a son and a daughter—

1) Edmund Frederic Herbert Smith, born 4 Feb. 1898.

2) Ruby Violet, born 20 July 1900.

Charles Adolphus seventh Earl of Dunmore, who married *Lady* Gertrude third daughter of the second Earl of Leicester of Holkham (*see* p. 505), has issue a son and five daughters—

(1) Alexander Edward *styled* Viscount Fincastle, V.C., M.V.O., born 22 Apr. 1871 (godson of H.M. the King), married 5 Jan. 1904, Lucinda Dorothea eldest daughter of Horace William Kemble of Knock, Isle of Skye, and has issue a daughter—

Marjorie Hilda, born 1 Nov. 1904.

(2) *Lady* Evelyn, married 23 Apr. 1891, John Dupuis Cobbold of Holywells, Ipswich, and has issue one son—

John Murray Cobbold, born 1897.

(3) *Lady* Muriel, married 16 July 1890, Col. Harold Gore Browne, K.R.R.C.

(4) *Lady* Grace, born 17 Feb. 1873, married 25 Jan. 1896, William James Barry of Witchingham Hall, Norwich, and has issue two sons and a daughter—

1) Gerald Barry, born 18 Dec. 1896.
2) Hubert Wyndham Barry, born 6 Oct. 1898.
3) Esther Joyce, born 3 July 1906.

(5) *Lady* Victoria Alexandrina, born 17 May 1877 (H.M. Queen Victoria godmother).

(6) *Lady* Mildred, born 13 Nov. 1878, married 30 June 1904, Gilbert Follett, Coldstream Guards.

William Heneage sixth Earl of Dartmouth, who married *Lady* Mary fourth daughter of the second Earl of Leicester of Holkham (*see* p. 505), has issue three sons and two daughters—

(1) William *styled* Viscount Lewisham, born 22 Feb. 1881, married 7 Dec. 1905, *Lady* Ruperta Carrington third daughter of Charles Robert first Earl Carrington, and has issue—

A daughter, born 27 Oct. 1906.

(2) *Hon.* Gerald Legge, born 30 Apr. 1882.

(3) *Hon.* Humphry Legge, born 14 March 1888, Midshipman R.N.

(4) *Lady* Dorothy, born 24 June 1883, married 3 Oct. 1907, Francis Hugo Lindley Meynell.

(5) *Lady* Joan Margaret, born 21 Feb. 1885.

Robert Bermingham fourth Earl of Leitrim, who married *Lady* Winifred fifth daughter of the second Earl of Leicester of Holkham (*see* p. 505), had issue three sons and five daughters—

(1) Charles fifth Earl of Leitrim, born 23 June 1879, married 22 Oct. 1902, Violet Lina only daughter of Robert Henderson of Sedgwick Park, Sussex.

(2) *Hon.* Robert Clements, born 1 May 1888, died 28 Apr. 1890.

(3) *Hon.* Francis Patrick Clements, born 13 Sept. 1885.

(4) *Lady* Winifred Edith, born 1874, married 27 Jan. 1899, Arthur H. Renshaw, and has issue two sons—

1) Thomas Arthur Renshaw, born 1890.

2) Horatio Herbert Renshaw, born 1902.

(5) *Lady* Mary Hilda, born 1875, married 5 July 1905 to *Hon.* Robert John Strutt.

(6) *Lady* Maude, born 1877, married 19 Jan. 1899, Maj. Henry Windham Vivian, who died 17 Nov. 1901, leaving issue one daughter—

Audrey Emily, born 24 Sept. 1899.

(7) *Lady* Lily, born 1 Jan. and died 13 Feb. 1882.

(8) *Lady* Kathleen, born 1888.

Henry second Baron Belper, who married *Lady* Margaret sixth daughter of the second Earl of Leicester of Holkham (*see* p. 505), has had issue three sons and five daughters—

(1) *Hon.* William Strutt, born 8 Feb. 1875, died unmarried 5 Oct. 1898.

(2) *Hon.* Reginald Edward Strutt, born 12 July 1881, died 10 May 1888.

(3) *Hon.* Algernon Henry Strutt, born 6 May 1883, Lieut. 2nd Life Guards.

(4) *Hon.* NORAH, born 17 June 1876.

(5) *Hon.* LILIAN, born 31 Oct. 1877, married 10 Jan. 1901, Vernon Austen Malcolmson.

(6) *Hon.* HILDA, born 25 May 1879, married 23 Oct. 1906, Charles Israel Loraine Allix.

(7) *Hon.* MARGARET, born 4 Feb. 1886.

(8) *Hon.* MURIEL, born 30 Oct. 1890.

INDEX

Abbot, Charles. *See* Colchester, Lord
Abbott, Henry, II. 392, 397
Abolition of Slavery. *See* Slavery, Abolition of
Adair, Sir Robert, II. 176, 414–16, 425, 433
Adam, W., I. 329
Addington. *See* Sidmouth, Lord
Agricultural Depression, II. 267, 276, 388
— Labourers, II. 110
— Machinery, II. 391
— Petition (Norfolk), II. 277
Aix-la-Chapelle, II. 414
Albaini, Cardinal, I. 45
Albani, Countess d'. *See* Stolberg, Louise of
Albemarle, William Charles, Earl of, I. 162, 423; II. 40, 95, 110, 113, 115, 180, 239, 259, 282, 434, 466
— George, Thomas, Earl of, I. 171, 223, 224, 242, 332, 425; II. 224
— Lady, death, II. 180
Alceme, the, II. 57
Alderson, Dr., II. 12
— Miss. *See* Opie, Amelia
— Alexander I, of Russia, II. 3
Alfonso, King of Naples, II. 135
Allen, Mr., of Fakenham, II. 370
— John, I. 103
— Maria, I. 369; II. 193
— Miss, of Lynn, II. 7
Allerton, II. 129, 140
Amelia, Princess, I. 87
America, Coke's influence in, I. 306–319; II. 495
Amiens, Peace of, II. 3, 88
Amyott, Sir Peter, I. 241
Andover, Viscount, marriage, I. 426; death, 440–44
— Viscountess, I. 233, 439, 440, 448; II. 1; second marriage, 56
Angelo, Michael, I. 116; II. 144
Anglesey, Lord, II. 359
Annas, King of the East Angles, I. 14
Anson, Ann, afterwards Lady Rosebery, II. 285
— Dean, I. 410
— Henry, II. 339
— Thomas of Shugborough, married Ann Coke, I. 410, 439, 445; created Viscount, II. 48; death, 191
— Viscountess. *See* also Coke, Ann Margaret, I. 233; II. 147, 154, 191, 291, 296, 297
Anti-Corn-Law League, II. 116
Antony, Mark, I. 117
Arblay, Madame d', I., 344
Archer, Mr., I. 77
Argyle, John, second Duke of, I. 49
— Duchess of, I. 49
Ariadne, I. 108
Armistead, Mrs., I. 341, 353; marriage with Fox, 416
Arnold, General, Benedict, I. 210; II. 496
Artois, Comte d', I. 105
Assessed Taxes Bill, I. 430
Astley, Sir Edward, I. 83, 84, 85, 139, 149, 159, 200, 219, 220, 223, 228, 240; II. 8.

Astley, Sir Jacob, I. 229; II. 8, 73
Austerlitz, Battle of, I. 127
Austria, Francis, Emperor of, I. 127
— Empress of. *See* Maria Theresa
Aylesford, I. 79

Bacon, Francis, I. 101; II. 133
— R. N., I. 190; II. 123, 494
Bakewell, Robert, I. 136, 253
Ballendin, Mr., I. 55
Bareilly, II. 202
Baring, Hon. Mrs., I. 377
"Barley Mung," I. 270
Barré, Col., I. 170, 184
Barr's Court, Gloucestershire, I. 20
Barrymore, Lady, I. 121
Bartlam, Rev. J., II. 142
Bastille, fall of the, I. 376
Bathurst, Archdeacon, II. 80
— Bishop, II. 75, 80, 83, 132, 292, 339, 359, 386, 434
— General, II. 83
Battoni, I. 107–9
Baynham, Sir E., I. 6
Beadwell Hall, Oxon., I. 143
Bede, I. 14
Bedford, Francis, Duke of, I. 258, 262, 303, 351, 421, 438; II. 7, 78, 357, 424, 480
— John, Duke of, I. 300; II. 120
Bedingfield, Sir Harry, I. 56, 59
— Lady, I. 56, 59
Beefsteak Club, II. 169
Bennet, Mr., I. 171
Berney, Mrs., II. 69
Bettenson, I. 102
Bettishanger, farmer, I. 108
Billycock hat, II. 167
Bisconi, A. M., I. 21, 22, 24
Blackwell, Sam., II. 153
— Mrs., II., 153
Blakie, Francis, I. 266, 268, 279, 313; II. 122
Blomefield, historian, I. 2; II. 195
Blomfield, Bishop of Chester, II. 80
— farmer, I. 275, 295
Bodham, Mrs., I. 257
Boleyn, Sir G., I. 15
— Sir William, I. 15
Bonaparte, Jerome, I. 310
— Joseph, II. 410
— Napoleon. *See* Napoleon
Bonstetten, I. 106
Borromean Islands, I. 123
Bosworth, I. 136, 137
Bottari, II. 146
Boys, farmer, I. 282, 292
Bradford, Mr., I. 308
Brand, Mr., II. 89
Braybrooke, I. 79
Brett, farmer, I. 250
Brettingham, Mr., I. 37
— Mr., the younger, I. 45
Brick, Holkham, built of, I. 38, 39
Brick-manufactory at Holkham, I. 283, 288
Bridgeman, Orlando, I. 338
Brooks' Club, I. 171, 329, 338; II. 310
Brougham, Lord, II. 354, 366, 400, 447
Buckenham, living of, I. 362
Buckinghamshire, Lord, I. 173, 174
Buggin, Lady Cecilia, II. 185
Bull-baiting, I. 242
Bunker's Hill, I. 116
Burchell, Basil, I. 47
Burdett, Sir Francis, II. 20, 88, 91, 155, 244, 261
— Sir Robert, I. 141, 142
Burgh Hall, I. 15
Burgoyne, General, II. 177
— Montagu, I. 243
Burke, I. 303, 378, 382, 384
Burlington, third Earl of, I. 20, 26, 27, 96
Burney, Dr., I. 102
— Fanny, I. 102, 115, 343, 344, 369
Burnham, riots at, II. 394
Burnham Norton, I. 39
Burton, Lady, II. 349
Bury, Lord, II. 181

Bute, Earl of, I. 78
Butler, Dr., I. 358
Buxton, Sir Robert, II. 114

Cambridge, Duke of, marriage, II. 220
Camden, I. 1
Campbell, Lady Betty, I. 55
— Lady Mary. *See* Coke, Lady Mary
Canning, II. 87, 354
Cannon Hall, I. 117; II, 297, 311, 313
"Carey," niece of Prince Kaunitz, I. 127
Caroline, Queen, marriage, I. 419; II. 217, 239, 243
Carpenter, Lady, I. 77
Carroll, Charles, I. 309
— Miss, I. 309
Carteret, Hon. Edward, I. 34
Castlereagh, Viscount, II. 87, 278, 289
Castleacre, I. 13; II. 422
Castle Rising, I. 180
Catholic emancipation, I. 190; II. 2, 84, 226, 353
Caton, Richard, I. 309, 332; II. 472
Cavendish, Lord John, I. 169
Ceadda, St., I. 70
Chadd, Sir George, II. 39
Chamberlyne, George (Denton), I. 74
— Elizabeth, I. 74
Chambers, Dr., II. 437, 478
Chantrey, Sir Francis, II. 362, 369, 452, 454, 473
— Mrs., afterwards Lady, II. 363, 409
Chantrey Hill, II. 365
Chantrey's woodcocks, II. 366, 367
Chapman, Dr., of Eton, I. 356
Charlemont, Lord, I. 204, 383
Charles Edward, the Young Pretender, I. 105
Charlotte, Queen, I. 375; II. 179
— Princess, birth, I. 419; marriage, II. 178; death, 180
Chatham, Lord, II. 399
Chesterfield, Earl of, II. 121
Cholmondeley, Earl of, II. 8
Christian, Mr., II. 15
Clarence, Duke of, I. 411; marriage, II. 220, 341; king, 377; death, 445
Clayton, I, Junior, letter of, I. 261
Clement XIV, Pope, I. 109–114
— Mary, I. 90
Cleopatra, I. 117. Statue of, *see* Ariadne
Clifford, Lady de, II. 178, 281, 286
Clinton, Sir Henry, I. 202; II. 11
"Clippings." *See* Sheep-shearing
Cobbett, William, I. 271, II. 306
Cock-fighting, I. 33, 36, 242
Cocoa Tree Club, I. 141
Coke, Anne, wife of Philip Roberts, I. 73, 74
— Ann Margaret, afterwards Viscountess Anson, youth, I. 406; marriage, 410; II. 186, 191, 291; letter of, 296–7
— Lady Anne. *See also* Keppel, II. 160, 181, 238, 280, 281, 282; marriage, 283–8; character of, 291–3; birth of son, 305; letter to Dr. Parr, 310; her children, 329, 330; anecdotes of, 333–5; tour through Scotland, 340, 381; birth of daughter, 405, 431, 438; as Lady Leicester, 450, 451–2, 478–9
— Carey, wife of Edward Coke, I. 17, 18, 19
— Clement, I. 70, 71
— T. Parker, I. 140
— Edward, I. 72
— Sir Edward, Lord Chief Justice, birth, I. 2; career and character, 3, 7; letter of Sir W. Raleigh to, 6; dismissal and death, 8; II. 133, 467, 483
— Edward, Viscount, birth, I. 47; marriage, 52; illness and death, 61

Coke, Edward, brother to T. W. Coke, I. 76, 233, 334; II. 73, 451
— Eliza (Elizabeth Wilhelmina), Mrs. Spencer-Stanhope, afterwards Lady Elizabeth Spencer-Stanhope, birth, I. 411; father's affection for, 449; mentioned by Roger Wilbraham, II. 38; by Dr. Parr, 56, 107, 219; by Sir J. E. Smith, 130, 131; by Sir Harry Keppel, 155; by the Duke of Sussex, 196, 230, 237, 243; by Sir Francis Burdett, 245; childhood and life at Holkham, 151, 152, 153; début, 151; friends, 154, 159, 161, 181; marriage, 294–303; life in Yorkshire, 311, 312; relations with Lady Anne, 281; present at "Clippings," 248; her children, 331
— Elizabeth, afterwards Lady Sherborne, I. 129; II. 328
— Henry, of Thorington, I. 17
— Lady Jane, wife of Robert Coke, of Longford, I. 61, 73, 74, 82
— Jane. *See* Dutton, Jane
— Jane, daughter of Thomas William Coke. *See* Andover, Lady
— John (of Thorington), I. 17
— Margaret, afterwards Lady Hunloke, I. 77, 91; II. 328
— Margaret Ann, daughter of Thomas William, II. 405, 441
— Lady Mary, daughter of Duke of Argyle, I. 49–60, 87–91, 118–21, 128; II. 49, 50; death, 124
— Robert, I. 17, 29
— — of Longford, vice-chamberlain to Queen Caroline, wife of George II, I. 72
— — of Mileham, I. 2
— — of Sparham, I. 1
— Thomas, of Huntley, I. 3
— — builder of Holkham, afterwards Earl of Leicester, I. 19–66; II. 468
Coke, Thomas William, genealogy, I. 1; birth, 76; boyhood, 76–83; visits Holkham, 93; does the grand tour, 101–29; first marriage, 146; first election, 152; episode with Dick Merryfellow, 151, 152, 191–200; M.F.H., 148, 243; centenary of Revolution of 1688, 343; P.G.M., II. 193; second marriage, 283; birth of son and heir, 305; retirement, 418; peerage, 445; death, 479
— Wenman, of Longford, I. 74, 75, 83, 85; death, 148
— William, nephew of T. W. Coke, I. 233, 365; II. 162–68, 280, 306
— pronunciation of, I. 423
Coke's Clippings. *See* Sheep-shearing
Colborne, Lord, II. 486
Colchester, Lord, I. 208, 419, 430
Cole, chaplain, I. 97
Collyer, chaplain, II. 394
Condé, Prince of, I. 416
Conroy, John, II. 437
Conway, General, I. 188, 206
— H. S., I. 133
Corry, Lawyer, II. 106
— Rev. J., II. 106
— Mrs., II. 105
Cornwallis, Lord, I. 202, 205
Corn Laws, II. 114
Cosmo III, I. 21, 24, 26
— II, I. 23
Creevey, Thomas, M.P. for Thetford, I. 171; II. 130, 156, 290, 296, 422, 454, 495
Crewe, Lord, death of, II. 361
— Mr., I. 204
Crown and Anchor, I. 398
Cumberland, Duke of, I. 90; II. 97, 353
Currie, Dr., II. 81

Dalkeith, Lady, I. 55, 66
Daniel's "Field Sports," I. 331

Davy, Sir H., I. 438; II. 156, 363
Dempster, Thomas, of Muresk, I. 23
Denny, Mr., farmer, II. 165
Dent, "Dog," I. 188
Dereham, nunnery, I. 14
d'Evere, General. *See* Evere, Gen. d'
Devonshire, Duchess of, I. 330
Diana, statue of, I. 25, 26, 33
Digby, Lord, I. 132, 243
— Sir Henry, marries Lady Andover, II. 56
— Jane, afterwards Lady Ellenborough, II. 346–52
Dixie, Willoughby, I. 134
Dowsing, Mrs., I. 268
Doyle, Sir J., II. 315
Drackenborch, Arnold, I. 35
Dudley Grove, Paddington, II. 284
Dundas, Mr., I. 218
Dungeness, Coke acquires lease of, I. 377; II. 425
Durham, Lord, I. 386
Dusgate, Mr., II. 33
Dutton, Sir John, I. 130
— James, I. 129, 130, 132, 136, 220
— Jane, Mrs. Coke, I. 131–3, 143–8, 149; death, 445; monument, 447; II. 453, 482
— Lennox, I. 130
— Ralph, I. 415; marriage, 436

Egremont, Lord, I. 79, 303
Eldon, Lord, II. 170, 354
Elections, General, II. 8, 58, 378
Election songs, I. 426; II. 66, 70, 461
Election, Norfolk, voided; II. 73
Electioneering chair, I. 153
Eliot, George, I. 108
Ellenborough, Lord, II. 346
Ellman, J., farmer, I. 282
Elliot, Henry, II. 344
Elsden, Mr., II. 469
Erpingham, Sir T., II. 195
Erskine, Lord, I. 160, 357; II. 72, 132, 171, 261
Essex, Lord, execution of, I. 6
Eton, I. 91, 174; II. 464, 465
Everard, Scarlett, II. 379
Evere, General d', I. 314, 318
Exeter, Lord, I. 272
Eyre, Mrs., of Derby, I. 74
Eyres, G., II. 267

Farish, John, of the Montreal Agricultural Society, I. 313
Faulkland, Sir T., I. 79
Fearon, H. B., II. 381
Felbrigg, I. 324, 325; II. 95
Fellows, Mr. of Shottisham, I. 159, 429; II. 4
Ferguson, Sir Ronald, II. 183, 364
Ferrari, Signor Dominico, I. 22
Ferrars, Baron de, I. 224
ffolkes, Sir Martin, I. 101, 334, 348, 373; II. 28
— Sir William, II. 379, 463, 464
— Dorothy, I. 102
— Lucretia, I. 102
Fitzherbert, Mrs., I. 336, 337; separated from Prince of Wales, 418
Fitzwilliam, Lord, II. 221
Florence, I. 109, 118, 123, 124; II. 144
Foote, II. 169
Fortescue, I. 79; II. 168
Foster, Dr., I. 82
Fox, Charles James, I. 79, 118, 159, 165, 177, 182, 210, 212, 327, 338, 371, 384, 398; financial straits, 400; marriage, 416; Netherlands tour, II. 11; in Paris, 17; meets Napoleon, 20, 47; death, 50
Fox, Dr., II. 477
Fox's Martyrs, I. 230
Foxhounds, I. 148, 243, 438
French Revolution, I. 378, 379, 390, 393
Fry, Elizabeth, II. 16

Gainsborough, I. 209, 407
Ganganelli. *See* Clement XIV

Gardiner, Richard, I. 151, 191, 238, 246, 266
Garnier, Lady Caroline, II. 477
George III, I. 168, 177, 209, 216, 352; death, II. 228, 379
George, Prince of Wales (George IV), I. 336, 338, 375, 433; II. 95, 99; king, 228; death, 377
Gisborne, I. 140
Glover, Archdeacon, II. 153, 186, 240
Gloucester, Duke of, I. 90; II. 147, 241, 338, 406
Goderich, Lord, II. 354
Godwick Hall, I. 137
Gordon, Lord George, I. 203
Gower, Lord Ronald, I. 109
Gregoire, Henri, II. 375
Gregorians, the, I. 240
Grenville, Lord, Ministry of, II. 47, 108
Gresham, Sir Thomas, I. 15
— Lady Anne, I. 15, 254
Greville, the Right Hon. Charles, II. 337, 355
Grey, Thomas de, I. 84, 85
— Lord, I. 99
— Lord, afterwards Prime Minister, I. 224; II. 2, 82, 158, 400, 418, 443
Gubbins, Honor, I. 436
Gun, double-barrelled, I. 437
— single, I. 331
Gurney, Mr., I. 372; II. 16, 307
Gustavus Adolphus of Stolberg-Gedern, I. 105

Habeas Corpus Act, suspended, I. 416
Hadrian, I. 124, 125
Halford, Sir Henry, II. 437, 478
Hall, highwayman, I. 134
Hamel, Dr., I. 290
Hamilton, Sir W., I. 115
— Lady, II. 161
Hampton Court, II. 190
Handcock, butcher, I. 259
Harbord, Sir Harbord. *See* Suffield
Hargrave, I. 357
Hastings, Marquis of. *See* Moira, Lord
Hatton, Sir Christopher, I. 11, 326
— Lady Elizabeth, I. 11
— bells, II. 55
— vicarage of, I. 356
Hawkesworth, J., I. 333
Hawtrey, Dr., of Eton, II. 464
Haydon, I. 77; II. 455
Hepburn, Dr., I. 61
Herculaneum, I. 116
Hertford, Lady, II. 109
Hibbert, Joe, I. 333
Hobart, Henry, I. 173
Hobhouse, Sir Benj., II. 185
Holkham, acquired by John Coke, I. 13; derivation of, 14; building of, 38–42; library, I. 44, 325, 326; II. 126–50, 253; obelisk, 491
Holkham Heath, I. 38
"Holkham, Stranger's Guide to," I. 370
Holland, Lord, I. 324, 403; II. 183, 238, 357, 378, 473
— Lady, II. 183
Holroyd, Maria Josepha, I. 235, 264
Holtham, Sergeant, I. 434, 435
Home, Hon. James, I. 120, 129
Horseman, Rev. J., I. 364; II. 243
Hoste, Sir William, II. 160
— Jane, II. 161
— Captain, II. 161
— Dixon, I. 246, 325; II. 61, 160
Houghton, II. 390
"Hugh, Sir," I. 118
Hughes, Christopher, II. 170, 171, 313, 342–45, 407
Hume, J., II. 428
Humphreys, Mrs., II. 304, 305
— S., II. 382
Hunloke, Sir H., I. 91
— Lady, I. 91, 120, 446; II. 328
— Charlotte, II. 282
Hunter, John, I. 244

Hunter, John Dunn, II. 316–22
Hurry, Mr., I. 230
Huskisson, II. 354, 355

Ilchester, Lord, I. 79, 324; II. 340
Independence of America, I. 166; II. 382, 493
Indian Bill, I. 217
Indians, Red, II. 317
Inoculating land, I. 275, 276
Ireland, union of, with England, II. 2
Iris, the, II. 9
Islay, Archibald, Earl of, I. 50

Jackson, Andrew, I. 308
James I and Sir E. Coke, I. 13
Jeffs, Bob, I. 333
Jerningham, Lady, II. 190, 194
Johnstone, John, I. 364, 368; II. 105
Jones, Colonel, II. 384
— Inigo, I. 27
— W., huntsman, I. 244
— Richard Roberts, II. 139

Kaunitz, Prince Reitberg, I. 126, 127
Keith, Sir Robert, I. 128
Kennedy, Lord, II. 164
Kent, William, architect, I. 26, 27, 37
Kent, Duke of, marriage, II. 220; death, 228
— Duchess of, II. 439
Keppel, Admiral, Sir Harry, II. 155, 160, 189; Mr., afterwards Sir Harry, 346, 450
— Lady Anne, II. 160, 181, 238, 280. Further references *see* Lady Anne Coke
— Lady Sophia, II. 160, 181
— Hon. Thomas, I. 162, 171, 207, 224, 270, 286, 403, 459, 480, 493
— Lady Caroline, II. 176
— Lord, I. 333
Kerrich, Samuel, I. 65
— Thomas, I. 104, 110, 114, 118, 122
Kimberley, I. 98, 100
Kinderly, I. 98; II. 126
King, Charles, I. 309
— Rufus, I. 309; II. 88
Kipton Ash Fair, I. 256
Knightley, Valentine, I. 138
Kosciusko, Gen., II. 19

Lafayette, General, I. 190, 289; II. 20, 374, 412
Lambton, Mr., afterwards Lord Durham, I. 386
Lawrence, Sir Thomas, I. 312
Leeds, Thomas, Duke of, I. 17
— Duchess of, I. 312
Legge, Miss, I. 436
Leicester, Anne, Lady. *See* Coke, Lady Anne
— Thomas, Earl of. *See* Coke, Thomas; marriage, I. 29, 34, 41; death, 64
— Thomas William, Earl of. *See* Coke, Thomas William
— Margaret, Lady, I. 29, 31, 33; death, 144
— Simon de Montfort, Earl of, I. 226
— Earldom of, I. 223; II. 421
Leigh, Mr., of Stoneleigh, I. 363
— Mrs., of Stoneleigh, II. 154
Leinster, Duke of, I. 79
Lennox, Col. *See* Richmond, Duke of
— Lady Sarah, I. 329
Leopold, King of the Belgians, II. 177, 415, 454, 456
Lexham, II. 482
Library, Holkam. *See* Holkham
Linnæus, II. 126
Lisles, the de, I. 225
Litten, Charles, I. 308
Liverpool, Lord, II. 101, 240, 274
Livy, manuscript, I. 22; II. 135
Longford, Nicholas de, I. 71
Louis XV, I. 128
— XVI, I. 128
— XVIII, II. 109
— Philippe, II. 396, 399

Lovel, Lord, I. 33, 34. *See* Coke, Thomas
Lowell, James, I. 314
Lukin, Capt., I. 242
Lutterell, Miss, I. 90
Lynedoch, Lord, I. 300
Lynn Agricultural Association, II. 269
— I. 33, 35, 36, 249; II. 304, 381–2, 409, 439, 440, 481

Macreath, Robert, I. 179
Mæcenas, I. 124
Mahon, the O'Gorman, II. 25
— Captain, II. 293
Maid's Head Inn, I. 172, 228
Maittaire, M., I. 35
Malmesbury, Lord, I. 428
Malone, Lord, I. 204
Malt tax, II. 28, 388, 398
Maltby, Dr. Bishop of Durham, II. 156, 328
Mann, Sir Horace, I. 119, 122
Manning, Parson, II. 26
Mangel Wurzel, I. 285
Maria Theresa, I. 89, 119, 121
Marie Antoinette, I. 119, 128
Markham, Margaret, I. 71
Martenelli, I. 347
Martin, Sir Mordaunt, I. 285
Martineau, Harriet, I. 291; II. 480
Master, T., I. 147; II. 76
Maule, Fox, II. 190
Mawbey, Sir Joseph, I. 186, 211; II. 493, 396
Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Grand Duke of, II. 167
Melbourne, Lord, II. 400, 443, 445
Melville, Lord, II. 43
— Whyte, II. 163
Merinos, I. 254–6
Merryfellow, Dick. *See* Gardiner, R.
Miller, Sir John, I. 413
Miller, Sir T., II. 3
Ministry of all the Talents, II. 47; resignation of 84
Moira, Earl of, I. 80, 402, 418; II. 29, 157; letters, 199, 201, 313; death, 325
Molard, I. 296
Money, Charles, II. 32
Montagu, Mrs., Queen of the Blue-stockings, I. 61
— Lady Mary Wortley, I. 67
Moore, Tom, I. 383
More, Hannah, I. 239
Mornington, Earl of, I. 312, 418
Motteux, P.A., I. 17
Mountmorres, Lord, I. 115

Naper, Mrs., I. 130
Naples, I, 115, 116
Napoleon, I. 256, 304, 431; II. 17; meets Fox, 20, 30, 40, 87, 107
National Debt, I. 393, 404
Nelson, Rev. E., I. 321, 346
— Horatio, Lord, I. 321, 322, 346; II. 3; death, 46, 161
Newmarket, I. 133–135; II, 403
Newnham, Ald., I. 187
Newton, Sir John, of Barr's Court, I. 17, 20
— Carey. *See* Coke
— I. 101
Nollekens, I. 448
Nonius, Senator, I. 117
Norfolk, Duke of, II. 169, 447
— Agricultural Society, II. 116, 122
— Science of Agriculture, I. 262
North, Lord, I. 170, 190, 210, 212
— Dudley, II. 94
Norwich, Bishop of. *See* Bathurst, Bishop
— Union Society, I. 204
— Manufactures, I. 236
Notting Hill, I. 86, 88, 89

Obelisk, Holkham. *See* Holkham
O'Brien, I. 243
O'Connell, D., II. 356
Oldershaw, Archdeacon, II. 86

Oliver, A., Lieut.-Governor of Massachusetts, I. 314
— Mr., II. 221
Opie, Amelia, II. 12, 17, 74, 373, 449
— John, II. 12; dines with Fox, 21; paints Fox's portrait, 22
Orford, George, Earl of, I. 45, 152, 155, 179
Ormonde, Lord, I. 424
Osborne, Lady Ann, I. 17
Overman, I. 267, 278

Paine, Thomas, I. 385; II. 462
Pains and Penalties, Bill of, II. 237, 240, 241
Palgrave, Mayor, I. 163
Palladio, I. 40
Palmerston, Lord, II. 400
Pampallonne, French refugee, I. 79
Parker, Mr., of Devonshire, I. 204
Parker, Sir Hyde, II. 3
Parliamentary Reform, II. 89, 306, 404
Parr, Dr. Samuel, I. 234, 354, 447; II. 26, 52, 56, 104, 107, 219; death, 326
— Robert, I. 356
Paston, Judge, I. 9
— Bridget, I. 9
— John, I. 10
Patterson, Mr., I. 310, 311, 312; II. 376, 413
— Mary, Lady Wellesley, I. 310, 312; II. 345
Peel, Sir Robert, II. 355
Penda, I. 14
Pentney, Peter, II. 69
Perceval, Mr., Premier, II. 87, 101
Perry, James, I., 299; II. 173
Petre, Lord, I. 350, 383; II. 33
Pettiward, Daniel, I. 104
Pitt, William, I. 184, 186, 215, 218, 223, 226; II. 43; death, 47
Pliny, I. 117
Plumber, Mr., I. 412
Plunkett, Lord, II. 443
Ponsonby, George, II. 87, 107
Portland, Duke of, I. 159, 215; leads Whig seceders, 412; Premier, II. 87
Porson, Richard, I. 394–98
Posstle, Jehoshaphat, II. 88
Postlethwayt, Eliz., I. 125
Powis, I. 382
Pratt, Miss, I. 101
Pretender, the, Charles Edward. *See* Charles Edward
Prettyman, Dr., I. 362
Property Tax, II. 110, 113, 398
Pyle, Edmund, I. 65

Radcliffe, Betty, I. 425
Raleigh, Sir Walter, trial, I. 6; letter to Sir E. Coke, 6
Raphael, I. 25; II. 144
Rathborne, Mrs. A., I. 74
Rawdon, Francis, I. 80, 115. *See* also Moira, Lord
Reade, Lady, I. 130
Rennel, Joseph, I. 276
Reddish, Sarah, I. 71
Reform Bill. *See* Parliamentary Reform
Regency, the, I. 374
Regent, the. *See* George, Prince of Wales
Repton, Mr., of Oxmead, I. 371
Revolution of 1688, commemoration of, I. 343
— French, I. 291, 379, 388, 390–3; II. 439
Reynolds, Sir J., I. 76, 446; II. 22, 361
Richard III, I. 137
Richelieu, II. 20
Richmond, Duke of, I. 375, 402
Rigby, Dr., I. 178, 291, 293, 298, 300; II. 121, 250
Riots, II. 111, 116–19, 391–96
Rishton, Martin ffolkes, I. 101, 102, 104, 369, 373; II. 30, 35, 112–13, 191; death, 192, 472

Roberts, Anne, I. 73, 74
— Major Philip, I. 73, 77, 149, 376
— Wenman, I. 74. *See* Coke, Wenman
— Governor, Gabriel, I. 73
Robinson, I. 207
Rockingham, Lord, I. 165, 204, 214
Roddam. *See* Stanhope, William
Rogers, Samuel, II. 362
Rolfe, Mr., I. 148
Rome, I. 106, 115
Romano, Giulio, II. 145
Roscoe, William, I. 252, 358, 407; II. 81, 127; poem, 148, 287
Rosebery, Earl of, I. 230, 345; II. 51
Ross, Captain Horatio, II. 166
Rouse, Sir John, I. 227
Rousseau, I. 234
Rusconi, Cavalier Camillio, sculptor, I. 25
Rush, Richard, I. 317; II. 34, 170, 250, 261, 305, 448
Russell, Earl, I. 171; II. 20
— Lord John, I. 214, 342, 404, 416
— Lord William, II. 472
Rutland, Duchess of, II. 335
Rye, W., I. 148, 266, 292

Salt, tax on, I. 416; II. 278, 288
Salvini, A. M., I. 24
Sanctuary, Thomas, death, II. 151
Sardinia, King of, I. 105
Sarto, Andrea del, picture by, II. 144, 145, 146
Savoy, Princess of, I. 105
Scott, General, II. 341
— Sir Walter, II. 362
Sebright, Sir John, I. 260; II. 182
Seditious meetings, I. 416
Ségur, Count, II. 374
Selwyn, George, II. 124
Shee, Sir Martin Archer, II. 82
Sheep-shearing, I. 289, 290, 438; II. 31, 104, 246, 248
Shelburne, I. 205, 212–14, 216
Shelley, Sir John, I. 333
Sherborne, Lord, I. 130, 220; II. 286
— ride to, I. 146
— Lady. *See* Coke, Elizabeth.
Sheridan, I. 187, 384, 413, 415; II. 96
Shugborough, I. 409
Siddons, Mrs., I. 353
Sidmouth, Lord, II. 274
Sinclair, Sir John, I. 262, 303; II. 156, 254, 372
Six Acts, the, II. 223, 227
Slavery, abolition of, II. 84
Smith, Edward, I. 28, 31, 32
— Sir James E., I. 99, 352, II. 126, 138, 175, 290, 329, 471
— Lady, II. 175, 176, 433
— Sidney, II. 78, 306
— William, M.P. for Norwich, II. 4, 372
— "Strata," I. 265
Southampton, Earl of, trial, I. 6
Southwell, S. T., II. 469
Spencer, Earl, I. 250; II. 98, 472
— Lavinia, Countess, II. 287, 332, 338
— Lord Robert, I. 328; II. 18
Sport, India, II. 200–16
Stafford, Lady, I, 312
Stanhope Spencer, Anna Maria, Dedication, 312, 331, 476
— — Lady Elizabeth, I. 117. *See* Coke, Elizabeth Wilhelmina
— — Mrs., II. 298, 299
— — John, II. 294, 295, 312, 313
— — Philip, II. 300
— — Sir Walter, I. 117, 446
— — William, II. 300
— — Frances, II. 300
— — Maria, II. 300
Statuary, I. 25, 44, 45; II. 362
Stephenson, Henry, II. 188, 230, 401, 495
— Lady Mary, II. 188, 441
Stevenson, Andrew, I. 319; II. 448
Stirton, Messrs., I. 286

Stolberg, Louise of, I. 105, 109, 133
Strafford, Lady, I. 51, 59
Strangways, Fox, II. 339
Stuart, Lady Louisa, I, 48, 52, 58, 67; II. 49
Styleman, Henry, I. 323
Sudbrook, Richmond, I. 59, 85
Suffield, Lord, I. 83, 146, 149, 194, 220
Suffolk, Lady, I. 428
Surrey, Lord, I. 211; II. 496
Sussex, Duke of, I. 171, 210, 291, 299, 300, 305, 315, 356; II. 89, 150, 185, 187, 228, 232, 237, 335, 337, 385, 396, 406, 431, 485
Swaffham, II. 481, 483
Swan Inn, I. 172, 173
Swans, judgment on, I. 11
Sydney, Sir Philip, II. 446

Tann, farmer, I. 250
Taylor, Dr., the Hebraist, I. 291, 351
— Samuel, Preface, page 8
— William, of Norwich, I. 358
Test and Corporation Acts, I. 227
Thanet, sixth Earl of, I. 28
— Lord, II. 97
Thetford, Wool Fair, I. 287; Bell Inn, 425
Thistlethwaite, Mrs., II. 82
Thorington. *See* Coke, Henry, of
Throckmorton, Sir, I., II. 93
Thurston, John, I. 33
Tiernay, George, II. 112
Tittleshall, I. 447; II. 481, 483; church at, I. 64; II. 161
Tivoli, I. 124
Tollett, I. 255; II. 127
Tompson, Charles, I. 159, 225
Townshend, Marquis of, I. 148, 173, 174, 224; II. 48, 59
— Marchioness of, II. 59
— Sir Roger, I. 2
— George, Col., I. 62–64, 79, 225
— Lady (Etheldreda), I. 249
— James, II. 59
— Charles, I. 65
Tracy, Count de, II. 374
Trafalgar, Battle of, II. 45
Traill, *Social England*, I. 271, 275, 287
Treasonable Practices Bill, I. 416
Trevor, General, II. 391
Tufton, Lady Margaret, I. 29, 36. *See* also Margaret, Lady Leicester
Twining, Rev. B. J., I. 146
Twiss, Mr., I. 353

United States, war with, I. 166–70, 172–77, 201, 202, 205–12; II. 101

Vasari, II. 145
Victoria, Princess, afterwards Queen, I. 109; II. 439
Villiers, Sir John, I. 11
Vinci, Leonardo da, II. 144
Vitruvius, I. 38
Voltaire, I. 263, 298

Waddington, Madame, I. 309
Waldegrave, Countess of, I. 90
Walpole, Horace, I. 50, 54, 60, 63, 87, 89, 108, 119, 121, 180, 214, 249
— Robert, I. 34
— Sir Edward, I. 90
— Miss, I. 90, 101
Wandsworth, Surrey, I. 79
War with America, I. 166–77, 190, 201, 202, 205–10, 230; II. 101, 383, 385, 495
— with France, II. 107. *See* Revolution, French
— Coke's dislike to, I. 201, 380; II. 466
Warburton, Archdeacon, I. 345
Wardle, Col., II. 89
Wharncliffe, Lord, I. 67
Warren, Earl of, II. 93
Washington, General, I. 190
"Water Meadows," I. 265
Waterloo, Battle of, II. 109
Wellesley, Lord, I. 355
— Lady, I. 312

Wellington, Duke of, "Iron Duke," I. 355; II. 108, 354, 400
West, Benjamin, P.R.A., II. 22
— Mr., I. 318
Westmacott, I. 117; II. 156
Wharton, Philip, Duke of, I. 72
Wheatley, Merial, I. 16
— William, I. 16
Whitbread, Samuel, II. 43, 89
"White cat," I. 88
White lady of Longford, I. 83
Whitworth, Lord, II. 28
Wilbraham, Roger, I. 388; II. 33, 38, 96, 102, 292, 315, 328
Williams, Helen Maria, II. 19
Willes, Judge, I. 146
Windham, William, I. 79, 174, 223, 230, 242, 247, 323, 346, 352, 353, 372, 386, 390, 405; II. 4, 44, 59; death, 94
Withburga, Saint, I. 14, 15
Withburgstowe, I. 14
Woburn, I. 438; II. 1, 31, 121, 156, 424
Wodehouse, Sir A., I. 84, 85
— Sir John, I. 173, 174, 199, 219, 228, 425, 428
— Col., I. 174; II. 9, 64
— Philip, II. 77
Wraxall, Nathaniel, I. 165, 224
Wynne, Sir C. W., II. 355
Wyvill, Sir Marmaduke, I. 73

Yarmouth, I. 230; II. 60, 421
Yeomanry Cavalry, Norfolk, I. 432; II. 39
York, Duke of, I. 87, 88, 90, 375; II. 335
Young, Arthur, Secretary of the Board of Agriculture, I. 259, 270, 282, 302, 405, 410; II. 7

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